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Nick Carter Stories

THE MURDER AT LINDEN FELLS
or The Mystery of the Cadillac Needle

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THE MURDER AT LINDEN FELLS;

Or, THE MYSTERY OF THE CADILLAC NEEDLE.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

A STRANGE CASE.

The hands of the clock pointed at half past five, one beautiful June morning, when Nick Carter, having just finished with his morning exercises and cold plunge, was told that there was a gentleman in the reception room who wished to see him on matters of the utmost importance, as soon as he was at liberty to descend.

Joseph, Nick Carter's manservant, who brought the message to his master, passed a card through the partly opened doorway, upon which was engraved in fashionable block lettering: "Reginald Meadows Danton. Linden Fells."

"Young Danton, of Linden Fells, eh?" murmured the detective, as he proceeded with his toilet after placing the card on the dresser. "What in the world can he want at this hour? I should not hesitate to wager a considerable amount that he has never been out of bed at this hour before in all his life, unless it was because he had stayed up all night.

"Reggie Danton! Humph!" continued Nick, musingly. "Whether he is in trouble or not, it is safe to say that he believes he is, or he wouldn't be here to see me so early in the morning."

Ten minutes later Nick entered the room where his caller was awaiting him, only to find him pacing up and down between the window and the door, apparently under the greatest strain of excitement.

Nick Carter's half-contemptuous, half-humorous remark, "Young Danton, of Linden Fells," had been peculiarly appropriate, for Reginald Meadows Danton exactly filled one's ideas of a young man of possibilities—and perhaps probabilities—who hailed from somewhere in the world of society and wealth.

He was neither tall nor short, fat nor lean; nor did there seem to be a distinguished trait about his appearance or his manner, and yet there was an indefinable something which compelled a stranger to glance at him a second time, and then to wonder why he had done so.

He was Reggie Danton to everybody, several times a millionaire in his own right, and the son of a man who had long since ceased to count his millions by units, having adopted multiples instead.

Linden Fells? Well, it was—and still is, although its name has since been changed—a magnificent estate situated on the bank of the Hudson River, at Riverdale, which is in Bronx borough, and within a short distance of Manhattan Island.

It was a country place where, once upon a time, a very rich and eccentric German had brought his family, and lived, while he awaited the pardon of his emperor, and who had also brought with him a love for his own Unter den Linden. And as the estate was heavily wooded, he had given it the name of Linden Fells. Later, when the pardon came from his emperor, he had sold out for a song and returned to the fatherland; and so, Horace Danton, the father of Reggie, became possessed of it.

Then Linden Fells became transformed.

From the home of a recluse who used it only as a place of refuge while he awaited permission to return to his own country, it was turned into an open house of entertainment, for the Dantons liked to cut a dash in the social world.

Mrs. Danton was a beautiful woman of middle age who still looked thirty—scarcely older, in fact, than her two children, Reginald and Mercedes, aged respectively, twenty-three and nineteen.

It had happened in the past that Nick Carter had done some little business for the head of the house of Danton, but it had been in connection with the commercial enterprises of Mr. Danton, and Nick had never met the other members of the family, although naturally they were all known to him by sight, as well as by the reputations

they had earned for themselves in their own separate ways.

Mrs. Danton—or the Señora, as she was often called because of her Spanish ancestry—because she was a leader of society and a giver of the most lavish entertainments in New York and Newport; Reggie, because he was a self-confessed high roller who was inevitably getting into some sort of hot water and paying his way out of it with gold—whom everybody talked about, and laughed at, and wondered what he would do next, but who was nevertheless generally well liked, and among those who knew him best, respected, too; and Mercedes!

The reputation of Mercedes Danton can be comprehended in three words: She was beautiful, she was brilliant, and she was, above all, good.

Everybody loved Mercedes. Her father adored her; her mother worshiped her; her brother idolized her; her servitors almost deified her; and it is truly a fact that she merited it all.

Reference to her upon any occasion was comprehended in the utterance of her first name only. There was but one Mercedes in the world, one queen of beauty, one fountain of sympathy and goodness—Mercedes. That one word was enough.

She was nineteen, with the poise, the repose, and the presence of twenty-five. She was tall, regal, as graceful as a fawn; she had unfathomable, gypsy eyes, hair of a dead black, with a faint suggestion of waviness, and when the light struck it just right, a touch of amber somewhere in the depth of the tresses which disappeared as it came, and which was inevitably changed to a reflection upon, rather than from it; and with all her somber hair and eyes, her long black lashes and brunette presence, she had the complexion of a true Irish beauty.

To describe Mercedes as beautiful is inadequate, for she was the standard of beauty.

And now, that we have outlined the chain of thought which flitted through the mind of Nick Carter as he descended the stairs to meet his early caller, we will return to the moment of their greeting.

"Good morning, Mr. Danton," said Nick, as he entered the room. "You rose early this morning."

"Yes. That is—fact is—I haven't been to bed. Thank you. Yes; I will sit down. Are you Mr. Carter? Mr. Nick Carter? Pardon me for asking, but I wish to be sure."

"Yes. I am Nick Carter."

"I have heard my father speak of you several times, Mr. Carter. I suppose you are aware that my governor is abroad just now?"

"I think I noticed in one of the papers, about a month ago, a mention that he had sailed. I did not know whether he had or had not returned."

"No. He's over there still. I say, Mr. Carter, do I look excited?"

"Well, yes, a little," replied Nick, smiling. "Has something happened to upset you?"

"Well, rather! Do I talk as if I could tell a connected story? Eh?"

"Why, yes."

"You'll pardon me, I know, but you see I wish to be sure. The fact is—— By Jove, old chap, I'm all of a tremble yet. I've been trying for the last two hours—all the while, in fact, since I started to come here to see you, to pull myself together so that I could tell you a connected story, and 'pon my life I'm not at all sure of myself yet. It's awful, you know, Mr. Carter! Horribly awful!"

"What is?"

"The murder."

"The murder?" questioned Nick, in a tone of surprise.

"Yes, a murder."

"Do you mean to say," asked the detective, "that you are speaking seriously when you say that you have come here to see me about a murder?"

"Yes. That's the long and short of it."

"Who is killed? Where was the crime committed? I hope, Mr. Danton, that this is not a specimen of one of the jokes you are so fond of perpetrating," said the detective severely.

"Joke! gad! I wish it were a joke! No, Mr. Carter, it is very far from being a joke, I'm sorry to say. It's a murder of the first water. A regular gem of the blue-stone variety. An out-and-out, dyed-in-the-wool, double-back-action, deliberate murder, carefully planned and scientifically executed, and"—he suddenly leaned forward in his chair and looked the detective straight in the eyes—"the joke will be on me, don't you know, Mr. Carter?"

"What do you mean, Danton? You will have to be more explicit if you wish me to pretend to understand what you are talking about."

"Good Lord, I'm trying to be explicit. I mean that I will be accused of this murder—I mean that there will be developed the best chain of circumstantial evidence you ever heard of, to convict me, and I mean that I am——"

He paused and rose from his chair, crossing the room to the window and then returning.

"Well?" said Nick. "What were you about to add to your statement?"

"I mean," he said, slowly and impressively, "that I am not, myself, positive of my own innocence."

There was half a moment of silence after that extraordinary statement, and it was Danton who first broke it.

"Do you wonder now that I asked you if I looked excited, and if you thought I could tell a connected story?"

"In the light of the statement you have just made, it seems doubtful if you can tell one," said Nick slowly.

"You tell me that there has been a murder committed, that you will be accused of the crime, that there will be circumstantial evidence which will tend to convict you of the crime, and that you are not sure that you are not guilty. Those statements are rather extraordinary, coming from a man who is supposed to be sane, Mr. Danton."

"Well, all the same, they are as true as the fact that we are sitting in this room, every one of them."

"Then suppose you tell me why you have come to me at five o'clock in the morning?" said Nick severely. "If you are not sure that you have not committed a crime—which is a statement to be taken with a large proportion of salt—you are more than half convinced that you have committed one. My business, Mr. Danton, is to catch criminals, not to protect them."

"Well, that's all right. That's just what I want you to do. That's why I came here at five o'clock in the morning in all this rush."

"Why?"

"Because I want you to catch and convict the criminal. If I am guilty, I want you to convict me of it, just as if I were not here to engage your services. I want you

to prove who did commit the crime, and if I did it, I want you to prove it to my own satisfaction, as well as to a jury of twelve men. I've been asleep ever since I was born, Mr. Carter, but I woke up this morning in dead earnest, and I'm awake now, to stay awake, and you can gamble your life on that statement."

CHAPTER II.

THE QUARREL IN DANTON'S ROOM.

"You seem to be very much in earnest in what you say, Mr. Danton," said the detective.

"I am very much in earnest, Mr. Carter, never more so in all my life."

"Well, in the first place, suppose you tell me who is dead. Since you say that a murder has been committed and it is not unlikely that you did it, it is well to know something of the *corpus dilecti*. Who has been murdered?"

"Ramon Orizaba; my mother's guest."

"Your cousin, is he—or rather, was he not?"

"A kinsman of my mother's so far removed that the ties of blood are very thin; still, he has passed as our cousin. You know of him. He has been our guest, at intervals of two or three months at a time, for half a dozen seasons."

"Oh, yes; I know of him. Now where was he killed, Mr. Danton?"

"In my own room at the Fells."

"In your room? Where were you?"

"I was there."

"There in the room, when he was killed?"

"Just that."

"Then you did it—by accident, perhaps—and that is the reason why you do not——"

"No. You're wrong."

"Well, what then?"

"I was there when he was killed, at least I suppose that I was there, but I was either unconscious, or asleep, for I did not see it done, and I did not know that he was dead until I awoke, at three o'clock this morning, and found him."

"Had you quarreled?"

"We always quarreled. There never was a time when we did not quarrel."

"How was he killed? What killed him?"

Danton left his chair and crossed to the window again, but after a moment he returned and stood facing the detective.

"I was waiting for that question," he said slowly, "and wondering when it would come, for I had not yet determined how I would reply to it. The fact is, Mr. Carter, I believe that even the coroner and the physicians will find it difficult to determine how he was killed, and what killed him, at least at their first examination, but nevertheless, although I have not examined the body, save to look at one spot where I expected to find something, I can tell you what killed him."

"Then tell me."

"He was killed with a glass needle, three inches in length, and of the size of a common darning needle. Orizaba's hair grew very low on the back of his neck, and the weapon I have described was jabbed into the vertebræ at that point."

"So that death was almost instantaneous, I suppose?" questioned the detective.

"It must have been."

"Now, how do you know that he was killed as you describe?"

"Because I looked at that spot to find out."

"Why did you look there?"

"Because I expected to find what I did find."

"Why?"

"Because I had meditated killing him in just that way," was young Danton's startling reply to the detective's question.

"Great heavens, Mr. Danton——"

"It's true."

"In that case, I do not see what I can do to assist you," said Nick Carter firmly.

"A man who will meditate such an infamous thing," continued the detective, "and then have the effrontery to come here and confess it to me in cold blood, expecting me to sympathize with his troubles, must be beyond the pale of human sympathy."

"Wait, Mr. Carter. I quite agree with you—in the abstract; but this is different."

"I cannot determine the nice points of reasoning of that kind, sir."

"Just listen to me, won't you? I have been careful to tell you all the worst phases of this case first. Now let me tell you another side of the case."

"There certainly could not be others much worse, unless you are about to confess that you had progressed so far in your meditations that you had actually provided yourself with a needle such as you have described to me."

"I had such a needle in my possession," replied Danton, smiling pathetically; "and moreover, it has disappeared from its accustomed place, so I have no means of knowing that it is not the one now actually imbedded in the neck of my cousin."

"Danton," said the detective, "since you have been in this room with me, you have succeeded in giving me several very different impressions concerning you.

"My first glance at you when I came into the room, was that you had been on a spree, and that you had done something which had the effect of sobering you suddenly, so that you came to me to get you out of your trouble.

"The second impression was that you were in real trouble, but that it concerned another more than yourself.

"My third was that you were sincere in your statement that you did not know whether you had committed a crime or not, and were willing to take the consequences if you had done so, and my present one is that you are telling me a story in a slipshod fashion, which I do not like, and which is not calculated to win my appreciation or my assistance.

"Now, sir," concluded Nick, in a tone of finality, "if you care to prolong this conversation, there is only one course for you to pursue, and that is to tell me your story, commencing at the beginning and continuing on to the end—and that you do it in some sort of connected style, so that I can follow you."

"Well, sir," replied Danton, slowly and seriously, "I'll try. The fact is, I am almost crazy. I scarcely know what I am saying at all. I have tried as hard as I could to pull myself together since I started out to find you, and I have endeavored so strenuously to keep calm since

I have been here, that I begin to fear that I shall fail in both efforts."

"Tell me your story," said Nick shortly.

"Will you permit me to make two beginnings? They seem necessary."

"Tell me your story."

"Well, in the first place I attended a banquet at the club last night, and while there I drank of everything in sight, from cocktails, through the still wines and champagnes, to the cordials and cognacs. In short, I became very drunk."

"I can believe that. It was not your first experience, I feel very confident," put in the detective grimly.

"No. Orizaba was with me at the club. We started for home together in the same taxicab."

"You did not drive out to the Fells in the taxi, did you?" asked Nick.

"Oh, no. We caught a train from the station. I suppose it was the twelve-thirty, since that is the last train out."

"Well?"

"I remember entering the taxicab with Orizaba, and I remember leaving the cab with him, at the station; but I do not remember riding in the cars with him."

"That is not surprising. But go on."

"I know that when the conductor awakened me and told me we were at the Fells, I left the train alone. Orizaba was not with me then, for I remember distinctly that I left the train alone and walked from the station to the Fells alone."

"How far is it?"

"About half a mile."

"Were you still under the influence of the wine you had drunk?"

"Undeniably. In plain English, I was very drunk. So full, in fact, that I remember that I stopped and held several serious arguments with myself during that walk of half a mile."

"You are sure you talked only to yourself?"

"Why, yes; at least, that is my impression. I am quite sure that Orizaba was not with me then."

"Yet you are positive that you caught the same train that he did?"

"Oh, yes."

"Well, go on with your story."

"It was very mild last night, if you remember. I recall that when I arrived at the Fells the combination of wine and half a mile walk had heated me considerably, and I seated myself in one of the piazza chairs to cool off. Now I cannot tell you whether I sat there one minute or half an hour, for I don't know; I only know that it could not have been more than half an hour, because the train I rode out on is due at the Fells at one-fifteen, my walk from the station to the house must have consumed a quarter of an hour, which would bring the time up to two o'clock and my watch is stopped at two-thirty."

"What has the stopping of your watch got to do with fixing the time?"

"Only this: That I cannot start it. Something inside it is broken, and I argue that I must have broken it while winding the watch."

"Well?"

"Drunk or sober, I have always been in the habit of winding my watch the last thing before removing my waistcoat, and never at any other time."

"So you think that you stopped your watch by breaking it while winding it, the last thing before going to bed?"

"Yes; only I didn't go to bed. In fact, I didn't make any preparation to do so, more than to remove my coat and vest. But I am getting too far ahead of my story."

"Tell it in your own way."

"We will say, then, that I went upstairs at half past two, after sitting on the piazza for about half an hour," continued Danton.

"Very good."

"When I entered my room, Orizaba was there before me."

"Ah! So he did come on the same train with you, and doubtless walked from the station with you, also," put in Nick.

"That I do not know. The point is that he seemed greatly surprised to see me—he appeared, when I entered the room, as if I was the last person he expected to see."

"You were evidently sober enough to take cognizance of that fact."

"There are reasons why, as you will understand. Orizaba was standing at my desk when I entered the room. He had turned on the lights, and he had opened my desk, although I supposed the only key that would open it was in my pocket. He was looking at something—some of my private letters, I suppose, when I entered the room, and he dropped them on the desk with an exclamation of rage, and the next instant he flew at me like a tiger cat."

"Did you fight?"

"I don't know. I don't think so. I was not angry; only astonished. I know that we rolled to the floor together, and that presently we both rose to our feet.

"Then, I remember that I ordered him from the room, and that he apologized—or tried to do so. But I remember, also, that I refused to listen to any apologies from him. I was angry, and I told him that I wanted nothing more to do with him. In fact, I told him many things that I had long had in mind to tell him some day, and ended by ordering him from my room again."

"Did he go, then?"

"No. He refused to go. He dropped himself into a big chair near one of the windows, and said he would stay where he was until he got ready to leave."

"And what did you do then?"

"I told him if it wasn't for the noise it would make, I would either throw him out, or shoot the top of his head off, but as it was, and because I didn't want to disturb Mercedes—you know her rooms are quite near to mine—he could stay where he was if he wanted to, but I warned him that as soon as I sobered up I would go to my mother and father, both, and tell them everything I knew about him, and also that I would see to it that he was kicked out of the house for good."

"And then——"

"He only grinned, and said something about it being a more difficult job than I supposed to get him out of that family—that he would remain until he chose to go of his own free will, and——"

"Well? And——"

"Well, to be plain, I told him to go to Hades. Then I threw myself on the couch. Every light in the room was going, but I must have fallen asleep at once."

"And the time must have been as late as half past two o'clock, then, you think."

"Yes; or even a little later."

"What happened next?"

"I woke up."

"Woke up to find him dead? Is that what you wish to tell me?"

"Yes, just that, but let me explain the particulars, give you all the details."

"Go ahead."

CHAPTER III.

THE MYSTERY OF A DEATH WOUND.

"I woke up with the feeling that somebody had called to me, and I started to a sitting posture on the couch before I was aware where I was. Then, of course, a glance told me my surroundings."

"And you still had the impression that somebody had called to you?"

"Yes."

"Called your name?"

"Yes, and by my middle name, which is never used outside my immediate family. My father, mother, and sister always call me Meadow, or Med."

"And your cousin? Did he call you so, also?"

"Rarely. Usually he addressed me simply as Danton, and at times with the familiarity of some of my club friends, he called me Dan. But I discouraged such familiarities on his part, for I never liked him. In fact, I always hated him—despised him, hated him, and feared him as well, but that is part of the story I shall tell you from the second beginning. You know I asked you to give me two beginnings."

"Well; you started wide awake with the feeling that somebody had called you, and that your middle name had been used. Go on."

"Not wide awake. I was dazed. There was an instant when I did not know where I was."

"Naturally."

"Then there were several moments when I could not remember how I got there, although I could tell that I was in my own room."

"But it all came back to you as you thought it over?" suggested Nick.

"Not all and what did come back to my recollection came very slowly. Let me tell you things chronologically."

"Certainly."

"I rubbed my eyes and saw that I was in my own room. Then I looked around to see who had called me, and discovered Orizaba seated in the big chair by the window; but for the life of me I could not remember how he got there.

"I leaned back again among the pillows of the couch to think it over, and then I remembered that somebody had called to me, and I sung out to Orizaba to know if he had done it.

"He didn't answer, and I called to him again, and then it came over me that we had attended the same banquet at my club, and that we had come home together—that is, I remembered the cab part of it—and I figured that he was asleep, and had either spoken my name in his sleep, or I had dreamed that I heard it.

"Well, I remained in that position, thinking things over and trying to get things clear in my mind, for several minutes, and then I got up, stretched myself, looked at my watch, saw it was half past two——"

"But you had removed your coat and vest. Where was your watch?"

"In my vest on a chair beside the couch."

"All right. Go on."

"My watch said half past two. I felt rocky, so I turned out three or four of the lights, leaving only one of them burning, and went into my bathroom. In about three minutes I was in a cold bath, and nothing in this world ever felt so good as that did."

"It pulled you together, too, did it not?"

"Amazingly. Things came back to me that I had totally forgotten—but still I was hazy about Orizaba's presence in my room, and remembered nothing whatever of the quarrel."

"And then——"

"I finished my bath and passed back into my room, and so on through it to the sleeping room which is just beyond.

"It was my intention to go to bed at once, but as I entered my bedroom, there was a clock facing me, and the hands pointed at half past three. I could not believe that I had been an hour in the bath, so I went back into the other room and took another look at my watch, only to discover that it still said half past two, and that it had stopped. Then I thought that possibly it was run down, and I turned the stem, only to discover that the main spring was broken. All the same, if I broke that main spring at half past two, I had not slept much more than half an hour in all, taking the time for the bath into consideration."

"That is quite evident."

"Well, I turned then to take another look at Orizaba. To tell the truth I did not like the idea of his sleeping in my room, and I couldn't yet understand why he had done so."

"Well?"

"I hesitated a moment or so, and then I crossed the room to his side and spoke to him. He neither replied nor moved, and so I seized him by the shoulder and shook him."

Danton shuddered as he uttered this last sentence—shuddered, and uttered a low groan.

"And then——" said Nick.

"Why, then his head fell over on one side, and I saw that his eyes were half open, and—— Well, I seemed to know instantly that he was dead."

"What did you do then?"

"I didn't do anything at first. I only stood there staring at him in amazed wonder. I think my senses as well as my muscles were paralyzed."

"Quite likely."

"I replaced him as well as I could, in the position he had occupied before I shook him out of it, and then I felt of his flesh. It wasn't cold and it was not warm. It was sort of clammy. There isn't anything else that I know of that feels just as his flesh felt to my touch then."

"I can understand that."

"Well, the remarkable part of that moment is that everything about our conduct after we were in my room together, which I have already told you, came back to me in a flash then, as if I had not forgotten it at all, and at the same instant, I seemed to know what it was that had killed Orizaba.

"Great heavens! Mr. Carter, you don't believe I did it, do you? You don't believe I could have done such a thing in my sleep, do you?"

"No. Emphatically I do not. Go on, Mr. Danton."

"I seemed to know what had killed him, as well as if I had seen it done—as perfectly as if I had done it myself, although then it did not occur to me that I had done it, nor as a surprising fact that I should seem to know how it was done."

"We will go into that later on, Danton. Just now I want you to be particular to tell me everything that you did from that moment on, until you entered this room here; and I want you to tell me, also, as nearly as you can, the impressions that fastened themselves on your mind between that moment and now. There is a subconsciousness here which I wish to fathom. And—there is one thing which I want you to bear very carefully in mind."

"What is that?"

"That no matter what impression you are making upon the mind of Nick Carter, you have not yet satisfied a jury that you are not detailing a cleverly concocted story—or, in plain English, that you did not actually kill Orizaba with deliberation and malice pretense. Do you understand me?"

"Yes; I understand."

"Well, continue from the point where it came over you suddenly that you knew how the murder was committed. What was it that forced such an idea upon you as that, Danton?"

"Nothing. It came accidentally. I discovered that in raising his head to replace it against the upholstering of the chair in the position it had occupied before I shook him, I was unconsciously examining the back of his neck under his hair, which, as I have said, grows downward, quite out of sight below his collar—in fact, below his shirt band, when he has no collar adjusted."

"You were searching there unconsciously, you say?" questioned the detective.

"Quite so, it would seem, since I realized suddenly what I was doing, and only realized it when my search revealed a speck of blood where it had oozed out and hardened into a crimson bead among the short hair on the back of his neck."

"And then——"

"Then, still without a full realization of my acts, I wiped away the speck of blood with my handkerchief—wiped it away with great care and looked for the sign of a wound underneath the spot where it had been."

"Did you find one?"

"Barely that; nothing more. Just a little mark like the prick of a pin, turned blue, and altogether unnoticeable unless you should search diligently for it. I shall come to that again, Mr. Carter, later, but it belongs with that part of my story which has the second beginning."

"Very good. For the present stick to the tack you are on."

"I will, Mr. Carter."

"What did you do next?" asked Nick.

"I think in all that I did then, I acted automatically. I replaced his head in position with great care. I even walked around in front of him to see that he looked quite as naturally asleep as when I first discovered him."

"And then——"

"In one of the inside compartments of my desk I keep a small metallic casket in which I store a few treasured keepsakes. Among the things I kept in that casket was the needle I have already described. It had been fastened into a cork handle, like the handle of a bradawl.

"The casket was invariably locked—I do not remember ever in my life to have left it unlocked—but now, when I went to it, it was not only unlocked, but it was open, and—the needle was not there."

"What about the cork handle?"

"That was there, and in place, where it belonged, but the needle had been broken off short against the cork."

"Well, what then?"

"I took the cork handle from the box and laid it on the desk. Then I crossed the room to my discarded trousers—for I had not dressed since my bath and only had my pajamas on—and I felt in my pocket for my keys."

"You found them?"

"Yes. Then I crossed back again to the desk, locked the casket and replaced it where it belonged, after which I closed my desk and locked it, but not until I had placed the cork handle to one side. Later, I put it in my pocket and brought it here with me. Here, I will show it to you," and Danton reached for a vest pocket.

"Never mind," interrupted Nick, "we will come to that later.

"You told me in the beginning of your story," the detective continued, "that when you entered your room after leaving the piazza, you found Orizaba there, at your desk, and that the desk was open, although you believed that you possessed the only key that would fit its lock. How do you account for that?"

"I don't account for it; I only know it is the truth. Every word that I have told you is the solemn truth, so help me Heaven!"

CHAPTER IV.

TRYING TO FORGE HIS OWN FETTERS.

"What were your personal sensations while all this was taking place? How did you feel about it all?" asked Nick.

"That is one of the strangest features of the case, Mr. Carter," replied Danton, "for while I seemed to know all about everything, as correctly as if I had seen the crime committed, it never once occurred to me that I was myself the guilty party. That aspect of the case was not impressed upon me till afterward."

"When did it first occur to you?"

"Wait, and I will tell you. Through all that I did from the moment I discovered that Orizaba was dead, until I began to put on my street clothes, I seem to have acted mechanically, as if I were really two beings, one of which was watching the other, passively. The finding of the wound on the back of his neck; the discovery of the open casket, the broken needle, and the empty cork handle—none of those things seemed to surprise me at all, until I had begun the operation of dressing, and was in fact half clothed, when it all came over me with a suddenness that made me stagger back against the wall like—well, as if I had received a blow in the face."

"What came over you? What made you stagger?"

"The thought that perhaps I might have committed that horrible deed in my sleep."

"No, sir! Disabuse your mind of any such thought as

that, now and forever. You did not do murder in your sleep."

"Well, I know that I did not do it at all, then."

"Certainly you know that. Others do not and will not. But you may rest assured that no person on earth will ever believe that you did it in your sleep, and I least of all. And was that all that came over you and made you stagger back against the wall?"

"No; not all."

"Well, what else,"

"The thought of Mercedes."

"What had the thought of your sister to do with it?" asked Nick.

"It was the thought of what she would think of the matter that brought home to me the possibility that I had committed the crime in my sleep."

"How so?"

"Simply because I have more than once told Mercedes—only in jest, of course, only she did not always believe that I was in jest—that some day I would kill Orizaba."

"Indeed. You have often made that threat to her, have you?"

"A hundred times; perhaps more. Very often. I have even showed her the needle."

"Ah! The needle again. You say you have shown it to your sister?"

"Yes; twice."

"And she knew where you kept it?"

"Certainly."

"Where did you obtain it?"

"It was given to me three years ago in Paris. It has a gruesome history, but whether it is true or not, I do not know.

"I only know that I was told that it had for years been the favorite sort of weapon for a famous—or rather an infamous—murderer, who was at last beheaded for his crimes. It was said that this needle was found in his possession when he was last captured."

"A French criminal named Cadillac. I know of him. The story is doubtless true. But to return to your sister. Why did you show her the needle and threaten to use it on your cousin?"

"Mr. Carter, if you don't mind, I would much prefer that you do not refer to Orizaba as my cousin. At best the relationship was so far removed that it cannot be considered, and I really doubt if there was any at all. I think he was an impostor, and whether he was or not, and notwithstanding the fact that he is dead, and I am not sure that I did not kill him in my sleep, or somehow, I know he was a scoundrel of the worst sort. I hope I did not kill him, but I can truthfully say that I am glad that he is dead. Don't call him my cousin."

"Very well. Now let us return to your sister."

"Well?"

"Why did you show the needle to her and threaten to use it on Orizaba?"

"The answer to that question belongs to the other story."

"Never mind. Let me have it now."

"Mercedes has known, ever since we have had any knowledge of Orizaba, that I hated him. In a word, my hatred of him has arisen chiefly because of his determined court paid to her. I have known all along that he was totally unworthy of her, but——"

"Then why did you not put a stop to his attentions at once?" questioned Nick.

"Because Mercedes would not permit it."

"Ah!"

"For some reason she chose to defend him always—that is, whenever I attacked him."

"Do you mean by that, that she favored his suit?"

"No; I do not mean that, for that is what she did not do. I have never thought that she favored him, and yet on more than one occasion she has constituted herself a sort of quasi protectress over him whenever we have had our accustomed three-cornered fight at the home concerning him."

"What do you mean by your accustomed three-cornered fight?"

"I refer to wordy battles which often took place among my mother, my sister, and myself, concerning Orizaba. These were usually begun in raillery, but always ended in bitter words."

"And on such occasions you say that your sister championed Orizaba?"

"Championed is not the word; it is too strong. She took his part, if that expression can be said to mean anything."

"I understand. Now let us return to the room, and to the moment when you staggered back against the wall with the thought in your mind that your sister would believe that you had carried out your threat and killed Orizaba. Was there any other reason than those you have mentioned, why it should suddenly have occurred to you that she would think you guilty of the crime of murdering Orizaba?"

"Yes. One other."

"What was that?"

"Merely the fact that the very last words I uttered to Mercedes before I left the house last night to attend the banquet, referred to such a possibility."

"How? In what manner? Explain."

"She came into my room just as I was on the point of leaving it to come here to the city for the banquet. When she entered the room I was seated at my desk engaged in addressing the envelope of a letter I had just written, and which I wished to post when I went out.

"The casket in which I kept the needle was open on the desk before me——"

"How did that happen?"

"I had opened it to get out a pearl stud which I was then wearing, and I had not yet closed and locked the casket and returned it to its place."

"Well? Mercedes entered the room; what then?"

"She expressed the wish that I would enjoy myself at the banquet, and also the hope that I would drink less wine than usual. I replied that when she and my mother decided to rid the house of Orizaba, I would be willing to give up wine altogether, and that the mere fact that he was to be present at the banquet was sufficient to make me get drunk, and I closed my remarks by taking Cadillac's needle from the casket and holding it up to her view.

"'As surely as there is a kingdom of Heaven,' I said, 'I'll jab this thing into his vertebræ some day, if he hangs around here much longer. I've had about all of him that I can stand.'"

"What reply did she make?"

"None whatever. She rose, and, without a word or a sign, left the room. Five minutes later I departed from the house and came to New York."

"But you returned the needle to the casket?"

"Certainly."

"Did you lock the casket?"

"I did."

"You are positive of that?"

"Certainly."

"And the desk itself?"

"I am equally positive that I locked that also."

"Well, now let us return again to the moment when after the discovery of Orizaba's death you staggered back against the wall. What did you do next, after that?"

"I finished my dressing with all the haste I could command. I put the cork handle of Cadillac's needle in my pocket. I locked the casket and put it away again. I locked the desk. I tiptoed around the room with great care, and as far as I was able to do so in my more or less dazed condition, I left things exactly as I supposed they were before I returned there from the banquet. Then I came out of the house silently, hurried to the station, caught the four-ten train for the city, jumped into a taxicab as soon as I got to the Grand Central Station, and here I am."

"Did you suppose that you could cover up the fact that you had returned to the house in company with the man who is now dead?"

"I suppose so at the time I attempted to accomplish it; I know now that such a thing would be impossible. There is the chauffeur of the taxicab who took us to the station here in the city; there is the good-natured conductor who knows me, who waked me when we were approaching our station; he has waked me many times in the same manner and he would not forget it. There is the conductor who came down on the four-ten train, who expressed unbounded surprise because I was going to the city so early in the morning. He had never seen me going in that direction at that time of day before, and he even asked me, jokingly, if there was anybody dead at the house, and I, like a fool, made a fool's reply to him."

"What did you say?"

"I told him yes; that Orizaba was dead."

Nick Carter almost laughed, so bright was the smile that suffused his face.

"It seems to you now, that it was a foolish thing for you to do, to tell the conductor that Orizaba was dead," he said, "but I will assure you that it was in reality the most sensible thing you have done in this whole affair.

"Now, two or three more questions," said Nick, "and then we will start at once for the Fells. We should be able to get there, I think, before the body of Ramon Orizaba is discovered; since it is not likely that any one will enter your room at this hour in the morning."

CHAPTER V.

BROKEN LINKS IN THE CHAIN OF CLEWS.

"What are the other questions, Mr. Carter?" asked Danton.

"I merely want you to tell me in as few words as possible, the other story you have referred to several times during our conversation."

"It is only about Ramon Orizaba."

"That is why I wish to hear it."

"I first knew of his existence about six years ago; I think, also, that my mother heard of him for the first time then. He came to her, during my absence, with letters of introduction which are said to have established his relationship to her. I have never correctly understood what that relationship is, more than that he was a distant cousin on her mother's side of the family.

"Nevertheless, Mr. Carter, I have long been convinced that there was something—some relationship, some power, some parcel of family history, some deviltry of some kind somewhere, which accounted for the studied insolence he often assumed to me and to others, and more than once, in his cups, he has as much as told me that it was out of my power to drive him out of the family."

"You are making a strong insinuation against your own family, Danton."

"I insinuate nothing against my mother; you must not understand me in that way. She is and always has been the soul of goodness. She is so good that she would suffer untold tortures to protect others, if she considered it a part of her duty to another to do so. It is some hold like that which this man had upon her, in my opinion."

"But you do not even conjecture what it was?"

"No."

"Do you think your sister might know what it was?"

"I am positive that she does know."

"And her being thus informed would account for her standing between you and Orizaba, in your quarrels, would it not?"

"Naturally."

"So, in reality, she was not protecting Orizaba on such occasions, but merely standing for her mother, is that the idea?"

"Yes. I see that now, but I assure you it never impressed me in that way before."

"You heard of the man first, about six years ago. How long has he been considered a quasi member of your family?"

"Certainly for three years; in reality I have no doubt that my mother has supplied him with funds for a much longer time."

"You have not mentioned that fact before. Why, in your opinion, should she do that?"

"Heaven only knows! I know that he had no supply of money of his own. He had confessed as much to me. I have known of several occasions when he has obtained money from her. I know them only by implication, of course, but I am as certain of the facts as if I had witnessed the transactions. And I do know positively of one occasion when Mercedes gave him a thousand dollars. She said it was a loan when I upbraided her for it, but I know that he never returned it, and that he never intended to do so."

"How old a man was Orizaba?"

"He was thirty last Sunday."

"Now, Danton, pay strict attention to the next few questions," said Nick.

"All right. I'm ready."

"It is impossible that Orizaba should have killed himself, is it not?"

"Absolutely so, under the circumstances, since the handle of Cadillac's needle was returned to its place."

"You are equally positive that you did not kill him?"

"Unless I did so in my sleep, and am therefore entirely unconscious of the act. I know that I did not touch him."

"And you are equally sure that he was dead? You are positive that in your dazed condition you could not have been mistaken?"

"Oh, I am certain of all that."

"And that the needle that is missing from this cork handle which you have just placed in my hand, is now imbedded in the back of his neck?"

"I know that the needle was in the cork at the last moment before I left my room to go to the banquet. I know that the needle is not there now. I know that there is—or was—the mark of a wound such as that needle would have made, at the back of his neck. I know that there was a spot—a bead—of blood there, which I wiped away with a handkerchief, and that in wiping the spot I was certain that I could detect, by a pressure of my finger, the presence of the end of the needle, under the skin."

"And yet you also know that the casket in which the needle was kept by you was locked and that the only key that exists within your knowledge which will open it, was in your pocket—by the way, were your keys in your trousers or in your waistcoat?"

"In my trousers."

"And you did not remove them when you threw yourself on the couch to sleep?"

"No."

"But you admit that you were very full of wine."

"Just about as full as I could be, and walk."

"So that when you dropped asleep in that condition, any person might have gone through your pockets and removed everything you possessed without disturbing you, don't you think?"

"Yes. I hadn't thought of that, but it is as true as gospel, all right."

"But—although you are equally positive that you locked your desk before you left the house to attend the banquet, yet you are certain that when you entered your room after having fallen asleep on the piazza and remained there approximately half an hour, you saw Ramon Orizaba standing at your open desk. Now is there a possibility that you are mixed about that part of the story? Remember, you were not sober at the time, Danton."

"Nevertheless, I do not think I am mistaken about it. Of course, it is possible that I am deceived, but I do not think so," Danton replied.

"Now, supposing you to be correct on that point, have you any idea why Orizaba should be searching about in your desk?"

"Not an idea in the world."

"Had he, to your knowledge, ever done such a thing as that before?"

"No; never—at least, not that I have suspected."

"Have you ever had reason to suppose that any person has opened your desk in your absence?"

"N-n-no."

"You seem to hesitate in your answer."

"Well, such a thought has never actually occurred to me before, but now that you suggest it, I am reminded that there have been several times when I have been annoyed by little things, which I attributed to my own carelessness."

"Such as——"

"Such as discovering papers or letters in pigeonholes where they did not belong. Such as searching for things that were not in their proper places when I found them. I am extremely methodical about some of my habits, and it is one of my boasts that I could go to my desk at night and place my hand on anything I desired to find there."

"And yet you have occasionally found things not in their accustomed places, eh?"

"Yes."

"When was the first experience of that kind?"

"I don't remember. Two or three years ago, perhaps longer."

"Has it happened frequently?"

"No. Several times, I should say; but at very long intervals."

"Do you keep a check book in your desk?"

"Certainly."

"Are you as systematic and methodical concerning the stubs in your check book, as you are about the arrangement of your desk?"

"I am afraid not."

"Now, go back to the time when you left the train at the Fells, on your way home from the banquet. You say you have no recollection that Orizaba was with you during the walk from the station to the house?"

"None whatever."

"And yet you say that you stopped two or three times and indulged in soliloquies—held animated dialogues with the lamp-posts and the telegraph poles, eh?"

"Oh, yes; there is no doubt of that."

"When you reached the piazza, and dropped into a chair there, are you sure that you were alone?"

"As sure as I am of anything at all. Everything is more or less hazy, you know."

"But half an hour later, or thereabouts, when you went to your room, Orizaba was standing at your desk, which was open?"

"Yes."

"And there was no train that could have arrived from the city, in the meantime?"

"Not unless it was a special."

"Now, with your knowledge of Orizaba and his habits, of the relations he occupied in the household of the acquaintances he cultivated, can you offer any suggestion concerning the identity of any person who might have killed him? I don't necessarily mean who did kill him, but who might have done so at any time or place?"

"Nobody but Reginald Meadows Danton—myself. The fact is, Carter, Orizaba was generally well liked. He was quite a favorite at the club. I don't know that he had an enemy in the world, save myself—and possibly my father. Only, of course, the governor is out of the question. He's in Europe, anyhow; and, besides, his dislike for Orizaba was only general. He disliked to have strangers around the house at any time. We have always entertained lavishly, but it was always a bore to the governor. Dear old dad hasn't an ambition in life that hasn't the dollar sign in front of it. You must not get the idea that because I hated and despise Orizaba, that everybody else did the same. On the contrary, he was a general favorite."

"Very well, Danton," said the detective, rising from his chair. "If you will wait here while I make some changes in my apparel, I will rejoin you presently and we will catch the six-thirty train for the Fells. For the present, I advise you to give the impression that you have not been at the house before, this morning, and if the body of Orizaba has not already been found, we will discover

it. After that, we must be guided by events. My presence with you, you can explain on the plea that I am a Mr. Felix Parsons, of London, an old friend whom you unexpectedly met at the club."

CHAPTER VI.

THE PICTURE IN THE ROSE GARDEN.

Nick Carter and his young client walked from the station to the Fells, and while they were on their way, the detective took occasion to refer to another point that had been menioned by Danton, and one to which he had especially objected at the time it was made.

"In the beginning of our conversation this morning," he said, "you used the expression that you had long 'meditated' killing Orizaba some day. Later, you told me about the needle, but I have not yet gone into that subject of meditation. I would like to know exactly what you meant by the use of that word in connection with the possible death of Ramon Orizaba."

"I don't think I meant the expression to be understood in exactly the way you took it," replied Danton. "I did not mean that I had actually meditated the murdering of him."

"It sounded very much like such a statement," commented Nick.

"Well, I will tell you how I have meditated upon his death by violence. If the consequences of committing such a deed were purely physical—if there were no moral side to the question—if the only thing that I could have outraged by the commission of such an act had been the law, I think I should have killed him long ago."

"That is an extremely dangerous sentiment for you to express under the existing circumstances, Danton."

"Oh, I know that; but that isn't the point. When I meditated upon his death, it was in the form of thinking out regrets that, because of the moral and mental aspects of the case, I was debarred from killing him. I have wished that we might both return to savagery long enough for me to take his life without experiencing regret for the act afterward. I wanted him dead and I wanted to kill him, but I never for an instant considered the possibility that I would do so; precisely in the same ratio in which my adventurous spirit is always stirred whenever I read of an expedition to the north pole; or, in fact, of any hazardous adventure of that kind."

"How is that?"

"Why, I meditate upon going there myself. I haven't a doubt but that I could accomplish it much more satisfactorily than Peary has ever done. I have meditated upon the accomplishment of such an expedition so many times, that I have well-defined plans for the work, and yet if the money, the men, the ships, and everything were placed at my disposal in the midst of one of those meditative journeys, I would no more have undertaken it, than I would seriously have considered the cold-blooded murder that has occurred. Do you understand me?"

"Yes. I think I do. A journey to the north pole is one of your dreams which you make use of on account of its soporific effect, when you are composing yourself to sleep; and the death of Orizaba was one of your dreams, which you used in connection with the happiness of your home life."

"Exactly."

"Then I think we understand each other."

"No, Mr. Carter. Not quite."

"Well, what else?"

"I would like to ask you a few questions."

"Ask them."

"You have assured me that you do not believe that I could have killed Orizaba in my sleep."

"I have; emphatically."

"You are certain that such a thing did not happen?"

"I feel as positive as if I knew by observation, that it did not."

"You have not assured me of your conviction that my hand did not strike that needle into his neck."

"Have I not?"

"No."

"Do you need that assurance from me?"

"I would like to have it."

"Why? Are you not satisfied on that point in your own mind?"

"Not exactly. I know that I did not do the deed knowingly; but——"

"But what?"

"This: I know what it is to do things when under the influence of liquor, and to have absolutely no recollection afterward, of having done them. I have awakened in the morning many a time, with no remembrance of places I had visited while I was intoxicated. I have met friends often, on the day succeeding some such spree, and have been told by them of incidents that took place the preceding night—incidents in which I had a part, but which I retained absolutely no recollection."

"That is a common experience with men who drink to excess, Danton."

"Yes, I know; but here is another point connected with it. In the majority of cases of the sort I have described, a rehearsal of the incidents recalls them to mind—I remember them, or rather recall them when reminded of them; but there have been other cases where such periods have remained total blanks in my mind, and which no sort of reminder could recall to my recollection."

"That is not unusual, either."

"Well, is it possible that I might have killed Orizaba while drunk, and have totally forgotten it?"

"No. I am sure it is not possible."

"Do you mean that?"

"Certainly I mean it."

"Then you believe that I am not responsible for the death of Orizaba? I want your assurance of that, if you can give it."

"Very well, my young friend, then you have it. I believe that you are no more responsible for the death of Ramon Orizaba, than I am—unless the fact that you owned the weapon that killed him, may be said to convey responsibility. But, Danton, I am not at all sure that you did own it."

"You are not?"

"No. The needle is missing from your desk. You think you wiped away a spot of blood from the back of his neck. You believe that the needle was imbedded in his neck at the time because you think you detected its presence there. It remains to be seen if your conclusions, arrived at when you were not in a responsible condition of mind, are correct. How do you feel now, by the way?"

"Rocky; terribly rocky and shaky."

Nick put out one hand and rested it on the shoulder of his companion.

"Danton," he said, "I feel that the very best tonic I can give you for your services, is to tell you how much I admire your conduct this morning. You have done nobly, and you have acted bravely and almost fearlessly. You have won my respect, my faith and my lasting friendship for all time, by your conduct since I found you awaiting me in the reception room at my house. Be as brave through the ordeals you will have to face, as you have been in the beginning, and take my word for it, the clouds will disappear."

Danton came to an abrupt stop, and there were tears in his eyes as he turned and faced the detective.

"You mustn't talk to me like that, old chap, don't you know," he said. "I've been up against it awful hard since I found that dead body in the chair in my room, and I can tell you right now that 'little Reggie's wild-oats' days are over, and that's no dream. Take my word for it."

"Good for you. I believe you are in earnest."

"In earnest? So much so that if you had told me just now that there was a possibility that I might, even unconsciously, be the murderer, I should have gone directly and given myself up, and faced the music. Thank Heaven it is not necessary."

They were ascending the long pathway which led to the side entrance of the house, and, as Danton ceased speaking, he raised his arm and pointed directly across the lawn.

Nick Carter turned, and his eyes encountered a vision of beauty such as he had never before in his life encountered, and the memory of which remained with him always.

It was the month of June, it will be remembered, and a great part of the garden was given up to the cultivation of roses.

There were thousands of them in bloom from the purest white to the deep and haughty red of the jacqueminot, and they clung to low bushes and to high ones. They climbed upon trellises and peeped from interstices in the lattice work built by the gardener to support them. They hung in clusters far out of reach overhead, and they smiled up from the dew-laden leaves and grasses in the beds. Roses in all their richness, in all the magnificent and munificent glory of strength, and color, and grace. Roses! Roses everywhere.

And in the very midst of them, framed in nature's richest and most priceless work, dressed in a simple white morning gown with the glory of her hair glistening in the slanting sun, with her eyes sparkling iridescently and her lips parted in a smile, and with festoons of roses hanging from her shoulders and arms, encircling her neck and filling her hands, stood Mercedes, looking toward her brother and his companion.

Involuntarily Nick Carter raised his hat and bowed —to the matchless beauty of the scene more than to the young woman who completed it. And then he was conscious of a shiver that went through him like an electric shock, when he suddenly remembered the cold and silent clod of clay that was sitting so still in a chair somewhere in the house before him, whose dead eyes would never look upon this scene, whose senseless nostrils could never again expand to meet the fragrance of that June morning—that useless body which only yesterday had been as filled with hopes and longings as any person alive.

"It is your sister, is it not?" said Nick, in a low tone, to Danton.

"Yes."

"Take me to her. It is an excellent moment for me to make her acquaintance. Remember, I am a friend from England—Mr. Felix Parsons, in the diplomatic service, you understand?"

"Yes," said Danton.

She saw that they were approaching her, and waited where she was, for them to draw near, and Nick saw at a glance that she had eyes only for her brother.

He saw, to, that her smile expanded as they came nearer to her; that a look of pleased surprise came into her eyes as she studied her brother, and he knew that it was because, although he had attended a banquet and been out all the night, he showed never a sign of the effects of it—of the wines he had drank, of the liquors he had imbibed; and then the detective was presented to her.

"Mercedes," said Danton, "this is an old friend and a very dear friend—Mr. Parsons. Felix, this is the best, the sweetest, and the dearest sister that ever blessed a young scapegrace, in this world."

CHAPTER VII.

THE DETECTIVE'S SEARCH FOR CLEWS.

Greetings had scarcely been exchanged when they were interrupted by the appearance of young Danton's valet who approached them rapidly across the lawn, and, pausing while still some distance from them, called out in a low tone:

"May I have a word with you, Mr. Reginald?"

Danton swept one lightninglike glance upon Nick, and crossed over to where the valet was waiting.

"What is it, Rogers?" he asked.

"I had occasion to visit your rooms just now, sir," said the valet, in a low tone, which was inaudible to the others. "Mr. Orizaba is there, sir."

"Orizaba? In my rooms? How is that?" asked Danton, in well-simulated surprise.

"I do not know how it is, sir, only that he is there; but that is not all, sir."

"Well? What more?"

"He is in the big chair near the south window, sir. I supposed he was sleeping, and, knowing that you would be offended if you returned and discovered him there, I sought to awaken him, sir."

"Sought to awaken him! Why didn't you do it?"

"He would not awaken, sir?"

"What the devil do you mean, Rogers?"

"He would not wake up, because he could not, sir. He is dead."

"Dead! Good heavens! You must be mistaken!"

"He is dead, sir; and quite cold. I saw you as you approached the house, almost at the same moment that I discovered him, sir, and so I came directly to you. Will you tell me what to do next, sir?"

"Yes, send one of the stableboys for a doctor as quickly as he can go. Say that Orizaba is ill. Bring the doctor to my rooms as soon as he arrives. In the meantime," said Danton, after a moment's hesitation, "tell nobody of your discovery. I will go with my friend to my rooms at once. Go. Wait at the garage for the doctor, and then bring him to me at once."

Then, as Rogers turned away, Danton called out:

"Oh, Felix. I am going to my rooms. My man tells me that Orizaba is there, and that he is ill! Will you come with me?"

With a murmured apology to Mercedes, Nick rejoined Danton, and together they entered the house and proceeded at once to Danton's rooms.

Nick nodded his approval when Danton related the conversation that had taken place between him and his valet, but he made no comment. But when they entered and closed the door behind them, he said:

"It may prove a little bit harder for you in the end, to attempt to carry the impression now, that you were not at home early this morning, but it is decidedly better in view of my idea of what is to come. Your sister seemed to take the news that Orizaba is ill with very little concern."

"Oh, she expected that we would both be out of the counting to-day. I usually am when I have been to a banquet. She thinks his illness is only the effects of his night out, and his presence in my room due to his not being able to find his own."

"I see," said the detective—but it was evident that he had other ideas concerning Mercedes' reception of the news; however, he said nothing more on the subject, but at once busied himself in examining the room.

Orizaba's position in the chair was precisely as Danton had described it.

A rapid but careful inspection of the back of his neck disclosed a small blue mark, not larger than the head of a pin, where the needle had entered the flesh. Around it there was no sign whatever of a wound, and there was not a thing that could be discovered externally, to indicate that an instrument of death had entered there.

"It is too bad that I cannot go deeper into that question here and now," said Nick, "but for obvious reasons the body must not be disturbed until after the doctor and the coroner have viewed it—and, anyhow, the body itself is the least of my concerns just now."

Suddenly he glanced up sharply at Danton, who was watching him eagerly.

"Did you have a shower in this neighborhood yesterday?" he asked.

"Yes. A light one; late in the afternoon."

"Are you wearing the shoes you wore at the banquet, or did you put on a different pair when you started to find me?"

"I changed them."

"Where are the ones you wore to the banquet?"

"Here."

"Let me see them. Ah! I thought so."

"What?"

"Never mind, just now. You think that half an hour might have elapsed while you were asleep in the piazza chair. Yes. I remember. Here is a small stain of ink on the ends of the thumb and first finger of Orizaba's right hand, as if he had used them to pick an obstruction from the point of a pen—a hair, for example. Tell me, was Orizaba left-handed? Did he write with his left hand?"

"With either. With his left hand almost as well as with his right."

"And you use purple ink on your desk, I take it, do you not?"

"Yes. I do."

"Good. Where are the clothes you wore to the banquet? Get them, for we must work rapidly in order to be through before the doctor arrives."

"Here," replied Danton, and he brought the evening clothes that he had worn the night before, and also, in fact, early that morning, from a chair in the bedroom, where he had thrown them down carelessly.

Nick examined them carefully and then returned them to their owner.

"They are all right," he said. "Hang them, if you can, in their accustomed place, where your valet keeps them. When you have done that, come here."

Danton returned in a moment and took his place beside Nick.

"Well?" he inquired.

"Look there," said Nick, pointing at the bottom of the legs of the trousers on the dead man. "Tell me what you see."

"Only a small, green burr."

"Exactly. Only a small, green burr—and on the other leg, the remnants of another small, green burr that has been picked off and thrown away. I did not find any evidence of such a thing on the trousers you wore, Danton."

"Well, I don't know, to be sure, but I don't think I went anywhere to get such things fast to me."

"Exactly; and it is evident that Orizaba did, am I not right?"

"Why, yes."

"Do you remember if he drank very much last night? Was he as intoxicated as you were when you started for home?"

"I don't know. I don't think he was, however, for the reason that he generally kept his head much better than I could."

"And yet, when your sister heard that he was in your rooms, ill, you say she doubtless believed that it was because he was drunk last night.

"Now," continued Nick, "you take your stand over there at the window and keep your eyes out through it, so that you can tell me the moment you see any signs of the doctor's arrival. That's it. Don't have me in mind at all, but tell me when you see anybody coming."

Danton obeyed, and as soon as his back was turned, Nick Carter began to work in earnest.

One by one he examined every pocket in the clothing of the dead man, turning out the contents, examining each article and paper separately, and with careful scrutiny; and while he did so, there were several articles which he transferred to his own pockets, and that with the appearance of the utmost pleasure.

There were two letters, a check, a fountain pen, a small cardcase, which, however, contained no cards, but was well supplied with other things, and a piece of blue blotting paper, which exactly fitted into the closed cardcase.

These he deposited in his own pockets, and then, when he had rearranged the clothing of the dead man so that there remained no evidence that anything had been disturbed, he straightened up and drew back just as Danton announced that the doctor had arrived.

It must be remembered that there was not a sign of violence anywhere upon the body of the dead man.

He was seated in the big, upholstered chair near the window, in an attitude such as a person asleep might quite naturally have assumed. His head was thrown back against the cushion, and his hands were disposed as gracefully and naturally as if he had used every personal sense in placing them as they were before the fatal blow had fallen upon him.

The doctor summoned by Rogers happened also to be

the coroner, which was fortunate, inasmuch as he could give immediate permission for the removal of the body. He happened also, like most coroners, to be not particularly gifted with understanding, and to be one of those individuals who believes so thoroughly in what he does know that opposite opinions serve merely to fasten his own convictions the more firmly. Moreover, an affair of this kind in a household like the Dantons! Well! He considered it a beneficent intervention of Providence that Orizaba should have died thus suddenly, in order that he might be called in and be for a moment on terms of familiarity with the multimillionaire's family.

But Doctor Jackson, the coroner, did not return alone. He brought a younger man with him, who was also a physician, a young Doctor Pollock, whose keen, black eyes, alert manner, and comprehensive attitude at once impressed Nick, so that the detective remarked, mentally, to himself:

"There's a young chap who will not be fooled by appearances, and who will manage to get at the bottom of this thing without much delay. I must have a private talk with him as soon as possible."

Doctor Jackson lost no time in arriving at a decision concerning the case.

"The gentleman expired four or five hours ago," he said, rubbing his hands together as if he were imparting information of the most delightful character, calculated to give unalloyed pleasure to everybody within the sound of his voice. "Overindulgence in stimulants brought about his death, I have no doubt.

"However," the coroner continued, "the autopsy will fully determine that part of it. There is, no doubt, however, that the valves of the heart will be found to be greatly enlarged, and—er—badly—er—congested.

"Your friend—or was he a relative, Mr. Danton?" said Doctor Jackson, turning to that young gentleman with a smile.

"I think I have heard that he was a cousin," he went on. "Yes? Very well, your cousin's death is due to heart failure, sir, superinduced by overexcitement and stimulant, followed by the sudden relaxation of falling asleep in this chair. Ahem! I think he may now be removed."

CHAPTER VIII.

CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE WHICH MIGHT HAVE HANGED DANTON.

It was at this juncture that Nick called Doctor Pollock aside for a moment.

"Doctor," he said, "I would appreciate it if you would consent to do me a small favor in this matter."

"Very well, sir, what can I do?" replied the doctor.

"I wish you would appear to accept whatever verdict Doctor Jackson sees fit to give concerning the events that have happened here this morning, and that when he takes his departure you would ride away with him—but that you would return almost immediately, if you can do so."

"That is rather a strange request, is it not, sir?"

"Perhaps; but I have good reasons for making it, as you will discover later."

"It would be scarcely a professional act on my part, sir," replied Doctor Pollock.

"Then call it the act of an expert. Doctor Pollock, I must be frank with you and rely upon your discretion also. I am not Mr. Parsons at all. I am a person of whom you have no doubt heard, a detective, named Nick Carter."

"Indeed! Yes, sir, I have heard of you and I am glad to make your acquaintance. I will also be glad to serve you if you will tell me how I may do so."

"In the first place, doctor, Ramon Orizaba was murdered. I have already discovered that much, but for important reasons I wish particularly that you should have the credit of the discovery."

"Murdered! There is absolutely no outward evidence of a crime."

"No; but I can show you much that will convince you; therefore will you do as I have requested?"

"Certainly I will."

"Then in an hour, if you will meet me in the room to which they are taking the body, I will talk with you at length there."

"Very good; I will be there."

Turning from the doctor, Nick motioned for young Danton to come to him.

"The servants already know that Orizaba is dead," he said rapidly. "I think you had best carry the information to your mother yourself. Tell her only what the valet told you and what the doctor has said since he arrived. That will be enough for the present. I will take it upon myself to go into the garden and break the news to your sister. Conduct yourself throughout exactly as you have done up to the present moment—if you think you can keep up under this awful strain."

"I must keep up. There is no choice."

"True. But don't drop down in your tracks. Once in a while you look as if you were about to do that very thing, my boy."

"I feel so, too. But I manage to pull myself together. If I drop, it will be because I am a dead one, too—like Orizaba."

"Keep up your courage. Go to your mother, and when you have finished with her, follow me to the garden where we left your sister.

"I remember that she said she had taken her coffee, and that after she had filled her lungs with the breath of the roses, she intended to sit under the arbor and read, so I have no doubt that I will find her there."

And so while the servants, directed by the two doctors, were conveying all that was left of Ramon Orizaba to the rooms he had occupied in life, Reginald Danton sought the apartment of his mother, and Nick Carter went out of the house through the side door and started along the gravel walk toward the arbor where Mercedes had told him she would sit and read.

He crossed the lawn and passed among the wealth of roses toward the very spot where he had been presented to her; and there, where she had stood during the two or three moments they had conversed together, the ground was littered with the roses she had carried in her arms and upon her person; and from that spot toward the arbor, fifty feet away, there was a trail of roses and rose leaves in such proficiency as almost to suggest that she had played the game of hare-and-hounds with them, in order to lead her pursuer to her retreat.

He followed quickly, for there was something about that confused littering of the flowers along the pathway which suggested haste and excitement. He could almost

imagine that she had flung them there in her excitement as she turned to fly from some real or fancied peril.

The roses along the walk seemed to speak to him and to bid him hasten to her side, and he lost no time in making his way to the arbor.

At the entrance he halted abruptly.

Inside that rose-embowered place, screened effectually from view from the outside, Mercedes had fallen, and she was stretched at full length upon the ground, her face now waxen in hue was turned toward the canopy of roses over her, and her whole attitude told him that she had fainted the instant she crossed the threshold and knew that she had escaped from the view of others.

"Poor child," murmured Nick, bending over her, and he began to chafe her hands and to wait patiently until nature should come to his assistance and revive her, for it was not at all to his purposes that he should call for assistance or seek restoratives, and thus betray a weakness which she had sought so bravely and strenuously to hide.

While he bent above her, and stroking her hands, and looked down upon her exquisitely beautiful face, vaguely wondering that creation could have wrought so perfectly upon one human being, a shadow fell across them both, and raising his eyes, Nick Carter saw that Danton had followed him into the garden.

"What has happened to Mercedes?" he demanded, instantly falling upon his knees beside his sister.

"She has fainted, that is all," replied Nick. "How is it that you are here?"

"My mother had already been informed, it seems. She sent me to bring Mercedes to her."

"Ah! Well, your sister is already reviving. It will be better, when she opens her eyes, that she should not discover a stranger. I will step to one side, out of her range of vision.

"When she is sufficiently recovered, you can break the news of Orizaba's death to her," concluded Nick.

Nick passed outside the arbor, but he stood where he could not only observe, but also hear all that took place between brother and sister, and, for reasons of his own, the circumstance was one which entirely accorded with his wishes.

"Mercedes," said Danton, in a low, eager tone. "It is I—Med."

She sighed and seemed to make an effort to smile, but it was a failure.

"I fainted, did I not?" she whispered.

"Yes, dear. I think so. Why did you faint? What was the matter? You looked so well when I saw you in the garden only a little while ago. What happened to you, Mercedes?"

"Did I look well? Did I look happy? Oh, Meadows! How can you say that?"

"Why, what is the matter, child sister? Why do you look so frightened? Your eyes——"

"Hush, hush! Tell me what the doctor said. What did he say?"

"That is what I came here to tell you, Mercedes. Ramon is—dead."

Not a trace of surprise manifested itself in her face as she looked up into her brother's eyes. Then she slowly raised herself to her elbow, thence to a sitting posture, and thus she leaned against the rustic bench, still looking into her brother's eyes.

"Did the doctor find—does the doctor know—did he discover what it was—that killed—Ramon?" she asked hesitatingly.

"Why, yes," replied Danton. "He said that death was due to heart failure."

"Thank God!"

"Why, Mercedes, what do you mean?"

"What do I mean? You ask me that?"

"Do you mean to tell me——"

"Hush, my dear brother. Did you think that I did not know?"

"Know what, Mercedes?"

"That Ramon was dead. Did you think I did not know? Oh, my God! I wish that I might have died a thousand times before I did know—before I saw what I did see."

"Good Heaven! Mercedes, tell me what you mean!"

"Hush, Reginald. I have never called you by that name before, have I? But it seems as if I could never again address you by the name I have loved to use. Oh, my brother, my brother, why did you not kill me also, instead of condemning me to live on, with this horrible secret in my keeping? Instead of forcing me to be the one person in all the world who knows that you have committed a —murder! Oh, Heaven help me!"

Young Danton started back in terror, and his sister buried her face in her arms against the rustic bench and burst into a passion of sobs.

But the young man pulled himself together wonderfully well, and he forced himself to ask quite calmly:

"Mercedes, I have feared that you would think that I had a hand in the death of Orizaba, but somehow I had disabused my mind of that fear so utterly that I had, for the moment, forgotten it. Do you mean to say that you think I killed him?"

"I know that you killed him, Reginald."

"You—know—that—I—killed—him? Good heavens, Mercedes, what do you mean? How can you know a thing which is not true?"

"I saw you."

Danton started back with a cry that seemed to him loud enough to have reached to the river, but which in reality was scarcely heard by the detective a few feet away, and then he stood there as if paralyzed, staring into the face of his sister with glassy, unseeing eyes.

"You saw me!" he whispered shrilly. "Then it is true, after all. I did it without knowing that I did it, and all the assurances given me by Mr. Carter, were wrong. I did it, you say, and you saw me. Oh, great heavens! Oh. Lord! I did it, after all, and I did it without knowing it!"

Mercedes raised her eyes again and fixed them coldly upon her brother.

"Reginald," she said slowly, "you are dearer to me than anybody in all the world, and I will keep your secret so well that all the tortures in the world shall never draw it from me—so well that the keeping of it will kill me, for I feel as if I were dying even now; but, Reginald, do not think that I shall hold you guiltless. Do not suppose that I can be made to believe that you did not commit that awful deed with deliberation and after full premeditation. I saw you, I say. I saw every motion that you made, everything that you did in that room."

"Tell me what you saw," Danton said slowly.

"You did not latch the door when you entered the room, and a draft had swung it partly ajar. I stood in the hall-

way. I saw you approach the chair in which Ramon was seated, asleep. You held a bottle in your hand, and I saw you hold it under his nostrils so that he might inhale the fumes of whatever it contained—and then I became conscious of the odor of chloroform."

"But there is no chloroform in the room. I have never in my life had chloroform in my possession," groaned Danton, whose only thought then was to convince himself that his sister might be mistaken. Still she paid no heed to what he said.

"Wait," she said. "I saw you hold the chloroform under his nose. Then you crossed the room to your desk. You found the casket and opened it, and I knew then what you were going to do. I tried to cry out. I tried to rush into the room, but I could neither speak nor move. All power of sound and motion had been taken from me. I was as a dead body, standing there, chained, compelled to witness the most terrible sight the eyes can behold—the infamy of my own brother. You opened the casket and you took from it that terrible instrument you have shown to me. I recognized it by the cork handle, and again I tried to call out to you and stop you—but I could not make a sound. I could not move."

"And then——" asked Danton tensely.

"Then? Then you passed behind the chair in which he was seated; you pushed his head forward until his chin rested upon his breast, for the chloroform had stupefied him so that there was no fear that he would awaken; and then, while you held his head forward with your left hand, you did something with your right, and I saw a shudder like a spasm shoot through Ramon's figure—and I knew that you had killed him, even as that terrible man, Cadillac, had murdered his victims in Paris."

She broke out into sobbing again, and he made no effort to stop her; presently she recovered herself sufficiently to continue.

"I would not have cried out then if I could have done so," she said, "for it was too late. I knew that Ramon was dead. I saw you replace his head back against the cushion of the chair. I saw that you smoothed his coat, as if to obliterate any traces you might have left there of the crime you had committed. I saw you hold up the cork handle of the instrument you had used, and I saw that it was empty—that the terrible needle was gone from it. I saw you take it back to the desk and drop it again into the casket where you kept it, and then I fled to my room, entered it, locked the door, and fell into a swoon from which I did not recover until the sun was shining into my room.

"Then I dressed and came out here. I steeled myself to act the part you saw me play, but when you went into the house, taking your friend with you to visit the scene of your crime, it was too much for me. I ran here to the arbor, and then—then I opened my eyes and found you beside me."

CHAPTER IX.

THE MAN ON THE COUCH.

Mercedes Danton was not only herself convinced that her brother was a murderer, but she had convinced him of his own guilt. Doubtful at first, and yet half believing that he might have unconsciously committed the act which deprived Ramon Orizaba of life, and later, aided by the reasoning of the detective, assured that he could not have killed him without knowing it, he was now thrown back into a worse condition of mind than ever, for here was one—his own beloved and loving sister—who had seen him do the deed.

When she ceased speaking, his mind seemed to drift into a stupor from which he was aroused a moment later by feeling a heavy hand on his shoulder.

It was Nick Carter who touched him, and Mercedes discovered the presence of "Mr. Parsons" at the same instant.

She leaped to her feet and confronted him with flashing eyes, for sorrow gave place to anger, and all the maternal instinct of woman, which is aroused quite as thoroughly in the heart of a sister when she is fighting for a brother as for a mother when she fights for a child—all that wonderful fighting and enduring quality with which God has endowed womankind, rose up within her to battle against the peril in which she believed her brother stood at that instant when his secret became the property of a third person.

"You heard me!" she gasped. "You heard everything that I said?"

"Yes," said Nick. "I heard everything"; but the kindly look in his eyes and the subdued voice in which he spoke convinced her that, at least, he was not immediately to be feared, and she sank back upon the bench and buried her face in her hands again.

Suddenly she raised her head and with a quick motion leaned toward him.

"You—you knew about it—before," she whispered tentatively.

"Yes," he replied. "I thought I did. Now I am sure that I did."

"Then—you saw—I mean—he did not chloroform you —— Ah! You were not unconscious. You saw—the things—that I have—described. You—saw—them—yourself!"

"Mercedes," interrupted Danton, "are you mad? What do you mean, sister?"

"Wait," said Nick sternly. "Sit over there beside your sister, Danton, and whatever is said, don't you speak at all. Your sister saw much more than she has described, as you will presently discover.

"It is a fortunate thing that I overheard this conversation between you," Nick went on, "for through its revelations we will get at the truth. Sit down, Danton, and wait."

Then he turned to Mercedes.

"Miss Danton," he said kindly, "you are overwrought, but you are brave, and tender, and true. You love your brother, even though now you believe him to be guilty of a horrible crime—even though you believe it on the evidence of your own senses, than which, it would seem there could be no better. But yet, there are times when our own senses deceive us most outrageously, as I shall presently prove to you. Yours have deceived you. You saw that murder committed, and you were paralyzed with terror at the spectacle. Has it occurred to you that your perceptions might have been dulled, or have become distorted by reason of the same terrors?"

She shook her head in a slow negative.

"Yet," continued Nick, "I will presently prove to you that you know positively that your brother did not commit that act."

"Oh, sir, if you only can. But it is impossible."

"Nothing is impossible. Things are only improbable. This one is not even an improbability. Now, follow me closely. When we—your brother and I—entered the rose garden an hour ago, and I was presented to you, where did you honestly think that we had come from?"

"I did not know. I had no thought about it save that you had been out somewhere together; but I thought I understood the reason for that."

"Precisely. You mean that you supposed that we had gone out of this house together this morning, do you not?"

"Certainly."

"It did not occur to you that I had just come from New York, and, in fact, had never set foot upon this estate before in my life?"

"No."

"Why?"

"Because I knew better than that. I beg, sir, that you will not attempt to deceive me. I will appreciate everything you would do for my brother, but do not think that I can be deceived."

"I think you have been deceived and now I am endeavoring to set you right. You say you knew that I had not just come here from New York. Tell me exactly why you think you knew that."

"Because I saw you before."

"Ah! Now, are you sure that it was I whom you saw? Did you see me sufficiently plainly to identify me?"

"N-n-no. I did not see your face; but it could have been nobody else whom I saw."

"You think so? We will see, for I understand now exactly how you have made an awful mistake. Was it on the couch in your brother's room where you think you saw me? No, let me put the question differently: When you were looking into that room through the half-open door, and saw the terrible scene you have just described, were you conscious that there was a person—a third person in that room?"

"Yes."

"And where was that third person?"

"Stretched upon the couch, apparently sleeping."

"And when you saw me in the garden with your brother a little while ago, you naturally supposed that I was the same person you had seen asleep on the couch in your brother's room? Is that it?"

"Yes; but there is also another reason."

"Indeed, what is that?"

"I know that there were three persons who came into the house some time after midnight, and I know that those three persons went to my brother's room."

"Excellent. Now we are getting at it. How did you know that?"

"I saw them from my window."

"Describe them as you saw them."

"My brother came up the walk first, and alone. I think he must have stopped on the piazza, for I did not hear him come up the stairs, although I listened."

"Well! and what next?"

"Soon after that I saw Ramon Orizaba and a stranger approach the house together. That stranger that I now know to have been you."

"Precisely. And did you again listen to discover if they came up the stairs?"

"Yes. I thought that all three came up together and went into the room."

"Now, what was it that called you from your room, so that you happened to be passing your brother's door at the moment when the sights you saw within held your attention?"

"Nothing at all. I was merely restless. I knew from his manner of walking that my brother was intoxicated. I also saw that Ramon Orizaba was in a condition that was not much better, and I naturally supposed the same thing of the third person. I knew they had gone into my brother's rooms, and I wished to assure myself that they were not quarreling."

"Now tell me what was the first discovery you made inside your brother's room. What was the very first thing you saw which attracted your attention?"

"I saw him. He was standing at the couch with his back toward me, and he was leaning over the person who was lying on the couch—yourself."

"We will say that it was I, for the present, if it pleases you, although I was at that time in my own bed in the city of New York. Now what was your brother doing?"

"I did not know. He had a bottle in his hand—an ordinary four-ounce vial."

"The bottle which you afterward supposed contained chloroform?"

"Yes."

"And your supposition was that he had been administering it to the person who was lying on the couch?"

"In the light of what I saw subsequently—yes."

"Now, when he turned away from the man on the couch, did you see his face plainly? I want you to be sure about this. You say it was your brother; I want to know if you saw your brother's face and so recognized it."

"I did not see it plainly; no."

"Was not the room lighted?"

"Very dimly. There was only one incandescent bulb turned on, and that was in the adjoining room—not in that one."

Nick turned to Danton.

"I believe you assured me that all the lights were turned on when you awoke. Are you certain about that, Danton?"

"Absolutely positive," was the quick reply, for Danton was now leaning forward in intense excitement, since he had caught the drift of Nick Carter's questions to his sister.

The detective turned again to Mercedes.

"The light was, then, very dim," he said. "Now, if you could not see the man's face clearly, can you give me any good reason for believing that it was your brother whom you saw with the bottle in his hand?"

"Only that I felt positive that it was my brother," said Mercedes, now beginning to stare in amazement, for she also was beginning to understand.

"Did this man whom you saw wear a coat?" asked Nick.

"Yes. He was fully dressed."

"Was it a dress coat?"

"No. I do not think so. I remember thinking afterward that Reginald must have changed his coat and waistcoat after entering the house, for I noticed when he came up the walk that he wore a low, white waistcoat and his dress suit. When I saw him with the bottle in his hand—or the person whom I did see with a bottle in his hand, wore an ordinary sack coat and a dark vest."

"Like what Reginald is wearing now?"

"No. Dark. Quite dark. Almost black, or quite so in that light."

"When he turned away from the man on the couch, did he at once approach the man in the chair—Orizaba?" asked Nick.

"Yes."

"And during all the time you were there at the door, while the man whom you supposed to be your brother was using the chloroform and the needle—while he was murdering Orizaba—could you still see the third man, on the couch?"

"Certainly."

"Then, Miss Danton, your brother is guiltless, for Reginald Danton was unconscious, on the couch, when the murder was committed."

CHAPTER X.

THE VICTIM OF A NEMESIS.

Mercedes started to her feet with a cry of amazed delight, nor was Reginald's joy less deep, although he remained quite still in his place on the bench. It was Mercedes who spoke first after the announcement made by the detective.

"Then who was it whom I saw and believed to be my brother?" she demanded.

"Ah!" said the detective, "that is another matter. I think, however, that we will experience very little difficulty in determining that question, when once I have had access to the lares and penates in the room of Ramon Orizaba.

"However," said the detective, glancing in the direction of the house, "I see Doctor Pollock returning, and so I will leave you two together, with the injunction that you had better go to your mother as soon as convenient. And, Danton, within a few hours it must be generally known that your guest was murdered, so I would suggest that you prepare your mother for the intelligence. In fact, I wish you would tell her at once, for it is more than likely that I will find it necessary to talk the matter over with her soon. Now, just one more suggestion: I think you owe it to your sister to tell her everything that has occurred, just as you told it to me, and to add to the telling all that has taken place since you entered my house this morning. You may also tell her who I am, and why I am here."

The detective left them then and hurried across the lawn to meet the doctor who had returned according to his promise, and together they repaired at once to the room where the body of Ramon Orizaba had been taken—to the rooms he had always occupied when he was a guest at Linden Fells.

"Doctor," said Nick, when they were alone together in the room and had closed and locked the door behind them, "I have asked this favor of you for two reasons: One is because I want a good, reliable witness to all that happens and to support every discovery I may make, and the other is because I require your professional services as an expert. The undertakers will be here shortly, and we will then have to turn the body over to them, but, in the meantime, we can easily complete such researches as it is necessary for us to make.

"You will find, to begin with," continued Nick, "that this man was killed by a needle which was thrust into the back of his neck. Come; we will turn the body over and search for it, and I will ask you to withdraw it for use as evidence. There is the only mark left by the wound. It is scarcely perceptible, is it?"

"No. I should not have seen it at all if you had not drawn my attention to it."

"Will you extract the needle? The broken end must be quite close to the surface of the skin."

"Are you sure it is there?"

"Positive."

"Just beneath the skin?"

"Yes; but be careful, it is of glass and will break easily; use precaution."

There was a moment of silence, and then the doctor, who stood with his back to the detective, spoke.

"You say the needle is of glass?"

"I have reason to believe it is."

"Well, you are mistaken. It is of steel."

"Steel? Let me see it."

The doctor passed the tiny weapon to the detective, who examined it critically, and then, after carefully wrapping it in paper, deposited it inside his own cardcase. But he did not hesitate to express his surprise to the physician at the discovery, for the needle extracted from the neck of the murdered man was in reality, a needle—a three-sided, sharp-pointed needle such as is used by furriers; in fact—to give it its true colloquial name—a fur needle.

"A dangerous weapon," said the doctor.

"Dangerous, indeed," assented Nick. "Now, doctor, if you will proceed with your examination from the professional standpoint, so that you will be prepared to give your testimony in detail at the proper time and place, I will give my attention to the other things in the room."

From that time on the two men worked together in silence, only occasionally calling the attention of each other to some discovery that was pertinent to the subject of their investigation.

And Nick's investigation of the desk and its contents, of the bureau and of every nook and cranny of the room itself, was eminently satisfactory—so satisfactory, in fact, that when at last he had completed his researches, and discovered that the doctor was also done with his part of the work, he said to him:

"Here, doctor, is quite a remarkable circumstance—one, in fact, that is entirely unique in my experience, for I find by this correspondence that I have examined, that this dead man has been, during his life, in constant correspondence with a person whom he believed would some day murder him—as he has done—and more than that, that he has even lived in close juxtaposition with the would-be murderer, for a period which, according to the letters, covers almost ten years. But the remarkable part of it is, that, although he has lived close to his Nemesis, and, although he has corresponded constantly with him, he has, in all that time had no idea of the identity of his enemy."

"Do you mean that the murderer lives here in this house?" asked the doctor.

"I mean that the murderer lived here in this house; but, unless I am greatly mistaken, the murderer has fled long before this."

"You know, then, who is the murderer?"

"Yes. I know exactly. Have you finished with your work, doctor?"

"Yes."

"Come, then. Let us go. I will ask you to join me in

a family gathering for a little while; after that, we will each turn our testimony over to the proper officials, and I think there will be little or no trouble in apprehending the assassin."

Ten minutes later, in the library of the house, behind closed doors, Nick Carter stood in the center of the room facing Mercedes, Reginald, and their mother. Beside him was seated the doctor, and upon the table before him were placed the articles he had collected during his morning's work—the things he had taken from the pockets of the dead man, and the effects and letters he had discovered in Orizaba's room.

"Mrs. Danton," he began, "I feel that I should address my remarks to you. You have been told, have you not, of the terrible thing that has happened in your home?"

She bowed her head in the affirmative. She felt too much emotion to trust herself to speak.

"Reginald," continued Nick, "I have occupied the few moments while I waited for you to bring your mother and sister to this room, in telephoning to New York, for I find that your valet, Rogers, has started for the city without your leave.

"Ladies, and you, Reginald, the valet whom you have known as Orin Rogers, is the murderer of Ramon Orizaba—at least, I am sufficiently satisfied of the correctness of that statement to have telephoned to police headquarters, in New York, for his arrest. Presumably he will be met at the station when he arrives in the city, but if he is not, I think I shall have no difficulty in finding him later."

"Rogers! My man, Rogers?" exclaimed Reginald.

"Yes. Has it ever occurred to you that Rogers was above his station?"

"Often. He was remarkably well educated for a man in such a position."

"He occupied several positions," said Nick, "among them, he represented himself as an agent for an enemy of Orizaba's. Rogers was evidently clever at disguises, for in his room, which I found time to visit for a moment, there was, in addition to a half-filled bottle of chloroform, a very good supply of wigs, pigments, and other necessaries for manufacturing disguises. Do you remember when Rogers came to you this morning in the rose garden, and told you that Orizaba was dead?"

"Perfectly."

"I noticed then that the soles of his boots were stained with clay—a kind of blue clay unlike anything I saw during our walk together from the station this morning—which you assured me was the route by which you returned to the house from the banquet."

"It was the same."

"Do you remember that I asked you if there had been a shower here in the afternoon of yesterday? I wished to know if the clay had been softened sufficiently to make those stains. In discovering the stains upon the boots of Rogers, I paid no attention to them, more than to observe that they were there; but when I saw stains exactly like them on the boots of the murdered man, I was interested.

"Also, the discovery of the burrs upon his clothing, to which I called your attention, brought to mind the fact that I had seen, also without heeding them at the time, marks of the same sort of burrs on the trousers of your valet, when he came to you in the garden, so when I sent you to your mother, and before going in search of your sister, myself, I found Rogers' room and looked through it.

"I was already satisfied that Rogers was the murderer when I talked with you and your sister in the arbor, but I chose to say nothing of the fact at that time. Now, I have additional proof. You will remember that I asked you if you used purple ink on your desk?"

"Yes."

"There were stains of purple ink in the thumb and finger of Orizaba's right hand. I asked you if he wrote with his left hand and you replied that he used both. Let me tell you now that he has used his left hand to rob you, systematically, for a long time.

"You have been careless with your check book and with your balances, Danton, so you have not discovered the fact, but here is a check he drew on your desk last night—a check for a much larger amount than he has ever dared to take before, doubtless, since the drawing of it made his hand tremble so that he spoiled the signature and was obliged to draw a second one. The second one is perfect. I found it in your valet's room, where he dropped it by mistake, showing that it was given to him, that both were drawn for him, that he was in the room with Orizaba at the time they were drawn—in short, that he was the third person whom your sister saw and believed to be you.

"Moreover, he is of your height and build, and in one of the drawers of his bureau there is a false mustache exactly like yours, which is still soft from recent use; so that it is not strange that your sister believed she saw you in the dim light. The lights, by the way, he turned off for the purposes of his work, and then turned on again when that work was done and he was ready to depart, in order that you might not see the difference and wonder at it.

"Also, while upon this subject, a trivial matter, but one in interest, in connection with the checks, is the fact that the ink inside Orizaba's fountain pen is black. Also, Orizaba carried a key which fits your desk and another which fits the casket.

"Also, like all expert forgers, he carried his own blotter with him. Fortunately in this case it was one that he had not used before, and bears a very good impression of the two signatures he signed last night.

"Now, in Orizaba's room I found many letters which partially explain these mysteries; but only partially. We will have to conjecture for the rest. At some time in the career of Orizaba, he has married and deserted a woman who died in misery and want, and since that time he has been pursued by a Nemesis in the shape of her brother who has taken a vengeance that is truly satanic, for he has held over Orizaba's head all these years—ten of them—the threat of imminent death, and, what is still more remarkable, he has during that time, managed to extort money from his victim while he has, himself, remained so darkly in the background that Orizaba has never once guessed his real identity.

"Of the occurrences of last night—or, rather of early this morning, I can only surmise, but either by appointment, or because the man was awaiting him, he encountered the man who he believed to be the agent of his Nemesis, between the station and this house. They walked away in another direction, and so got the clay on their shoes. That agent was Rogers, but so cleverly disguised that Orizaba did not recognize him—probably the agent was so familiar

to him that he never thought of connecting him with Rogers, having known him a much longer time.

"When they met last night, Rogers was insistent for a larger amount of money than usual, and finally accompanied Orizaba to your rooms.

"Orizaba was at your desk preparing to draw the check when you entered the room. Rogers was here also, for they believed you were asleep in a chair on the piazza. When you entered, Rogers concealed himself, and he remained concealed until you had composed yourself to sleep on the couch. Then, he chloroformed you and the proceedings continued. Rogers then took his check and went out, and Orizaba, overcome by all that had happened, dropped asleep in the chair.

"Presently, for some reason, Rogers returned. Doubtless he had intended to kill Orizaba, last night, since the encounter on the road. He administered more chloroform to you, on the couch, and then performed the remainder of the ceremony as your sister has described it to us, for she saw it.

"And now, Reginald, there is just one point about which I am at fault, but which I think this letter will possibly explain. I found it in Rogers' room, addressed to you, and I have not yet broken the seal. Before I do so, I will explain the point to which I referred.

"Your Cadillac needle was not the instrument which killed Orizaba. He was killed with a steel needle—a furrier's needle—but, the cork handle of your glass needle was used to press it into the flesh. The glass needle was removed and the steel one substituted for it, but why I do not know. Let us see now if this letter will inform us. Listen."

Nick broke the seal, spread the letter open before him, and read aloud:

"MR. DANTON: Although I have killed Ramon Orizaba, deliberately, and after waiting ten years, and in the meantime gloating over the prospect of doing so, I am not sufficiently a scoundrel to leave you to pay the penalty of my crime. I have thought of many ways of putting him out of the way, and your Cadillac needle has suggested the best one. But I am afraid that the glass is not strong enough, so I have substituted one of steel. At first I thought it might not be discovered that he was killed and that his death would be attributed to natural causes, but I will not take that chance with your life and reputation in the balance, so I write this.

"Why I have killed him does not matter to you. I will say nothing which will lead to my apprehension, and all the detectives in the world cannot find me or take me.

"I was obliged to use the cork handle of your needle in order to be successful—in order to push the weapon into his neck. You will find the glass one under the vase on the mantle in my room. ROGERS."

"Brief and to the point," said Nick, putting down the letter; and as he did so, Mercedes rose in her place and crossed the room to him, extending both hands.

"You have been our savior," she said; "my savior as well as Reginald's. God bless you!"

THE END.

"A Game for Millions; or, Nick Carter's Hobnail Clew," is the title of the story that you will find in the next issue of this weekly, No. 61, out November 8th. It's a Wall Street story of absorbing interest. Besides giving a keen insight into the methods of the "bulls and bears" and the "wolves and lambs" that are ever trying to knife each other in that great financial center known as "Wall Street," the story is full of action and has a plot that will keep you guessing till the end.

CALLED DOWN;

Or, Steve Manley in a Desperate Strait.

By ALDEN F. BRADSHAW

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

Josie West, accompanied by her fiancé, Mr. Barrows, reports to the chief of police of Pennville, O'Mara, that she feels confident that her sister, Belle, has been murdered. While she is talking to Chief O'Mara and Detective Steve Manley, a policeman enters with Belle's hat and several articles of clothing which he has found near the bank of the river. It is learned that Dana Radcliff, a married man, and a rich and highly respected citizen of Pennville, had been taking trips to a road house with Belle in a hired motor car.

Chief O'Mara summons Radcliff to police headquarters, and Radcliff admits that he did motor out to the road house with Belle on the night that she disappeared, but that the girl had had a quarrel with him on the road near the river, and had jumped out of the car and left him in a huff, declaring that she would not allow him to see her back to town.

CHAPTER IV.

STEVE GETS AN ASSIGNMENT.

Contrary to general expectation, and despite the efforts made to recover it, the dark waters of the Allegheny did not give up the dead body of murdered Belle West.

In the opinion of the police and that of a startled and censorious public, however, this scarce was needed to complete the fatal network of circumstantial evidence that had involved Dana Radcliff and cast him into a prison cell.

For nearly a week the press throughout the country pictured under glaring headlines and with vivid illustrations the knavery of the Pennville society man who cruelly had made way with the beautiful orphan girl whom he had wronged; and not for a month did the local papers cease upbraiding the dual life which had been led by wealthy and respected Dana Radcliff, nor from urging that justice should speedily make an example of him.

From comparative obscurity, the name of the West girls sprang into notoriety in a night. There were some who spoke ill of them, but with vague hints only, and these voices were drowned by those which extolled their virtues.

Two weeks after the crime, however, Josie West again startled the local community by being quietly married to Mr. Sidney Barrows in the chapel of the Methodist Episcopal Church. And the sewing-machine agent forthwith relinquished his lodgings in Dearborn Street, and took up his abode in the home of his young and beautiful wife.

To a reporter, who called to learn if any special occasion existed for so early a marriage after her sister's death, Josie politely informed that she was utterly alone in her home, and she no longer could impose upon the kindness of neighbors to relieve her solitude and sadness,

and that the marriage had been hastened only to obviate these conditions.

And everybody expressed sympathy for her, and said that the marriage was quite right.

And absolutely nobody dreamed for a moment that it was all wrong!

Meantime, Dana Radcliff grew gray in a prison cell, and the network of evidence against him became stronger as the day of his trial approached. The circumstances already presented were augmented by further incriminating details, and the discovery that the footprints made upon the river bank on the night of the crime corresponded precisely to the boots worn by Radcliff that night. Despite his protestations of innocence, for he cleaved stoutly to the story told Chief O'Mara, the general opinion was strong against him, and that his ultimate conviction was inevitable.

"My own lawyer states that I have only a bare fighting chance of acquittal," he sadly observed to Chief O'Mara, who was calling on him one morning just a week before the day fixed for his trial.

"But, O'Mara," he hastened to add, with intense feeling, "though I were to swing for this, I shall protest with my last breath my absolute innocence of Belle West's death, and my complete ignorance concerning it. You may take that for the solemn statement of a dying man, Chief O'Mara, and a man whose soul will say the same thing in the presence of God Almighty!"

Chief O'Mara did not reply to this, yet the fervor of the man had more than once impressed him.

"Who is the party, Radcliff," he asked, instead, "who lately intimated to you that you might possibly escape conviction by availing yourself of a flaw which he suspected to exist in the government's case?"

"His name is Michael Kirk."

"Is he a lawyer?"

"It was so stated on the card he sent up to me."

"What did you tell him?"

"I told him," said Radcliff, with some of his former dignity briefly lifting him above his fearful humiliation, "that I did not care to escape the law, nor to accept liberty in that way, even if the way existed. No, O'Mara, I will return to the world legally acquitted of this crime, or I shall bless that seclusion from the world which the walls of a prison afford me. I dismissed the man almost immediately."

"Did he offer any other reason for calling?"

"Other reason?"

"I mean, Radcliff, did he make any suggestion indicating that he wished to bargain with you for his information?"

"He remarked, I remember, that he thought he could pull me out of the scrape, providing I would make it an object."

"And you then asked him in what way?"

"Quite naturally, I did."

"And he stated that he thought he had discovered some flaw in the government's case, did he?"

"Precisely."

"Whereupon you dismissed him with the reply stated?"

"I did so, at once, O'Mara."

"Did he show any disappointment at your cold reception of his offer?"

"Not that I observed."

"Have you still got his card?"

"I have it here."

"Allow me to look at it!" exclaimed the chief, quite brusquely.

It was a modest bit of pasteboard, that which Dana Radcliff drew from his pocket and with tremulous hand tendered his caller, and it bore only the words: "Michael Kirk, Attorney. Rexford Building."

Chief O'Mara returned to his office at headquarters in a very thoughtful frame of mind. For all of half an hour after taking his customary seat he sat staring vacantly at his desk, with his dark brows knit to a frown above his intent eyes, and with his powerful figure motionless, save for the steady rise and fall of his broad chest. At the end of thirty minutes he rang a call to the outer office.

The summons was answered by young Steve Manley.

"You happen to be the one I wish to see, Steve," said the chief, when the young detective appeared on the threshold. "Come in here and close the door. I have something to say to you."

"All right, chief!" cried Steve promptly.

And he secretly hoped to receive some assignment more important than those of petty larceny and the like; for nearly six weeks had passed since the famous murder case in which he so signally had distinguished himself, and nearly lost his life.

"It relates to this West girl affair," continued Chief O'Mara, when Steve approached; "and I have quite a delicate piece of work I want done, which, perhaps, may be more easily accomplished by one of your years, Steve, than by an older officer."

"Let her slide, Chief O'Mara," said Steve eagerly.

"Note me carefully, then, and keep my information to yourself."

"Bet your life on that, sir."

"I lately have taken it into my head that Radcliff, despite the circumstantial evidence against him, may not be guilty of taking Belle West's life," Chief O'Mara continued. "If he deliberately plotted to kill the girl, he certainly made a very bad job of it, in that he left himself open to suspicion. If, on the other hand, he committed the crime upon impulse that night, the letter left by Belle West is curiously inconsistent, in that it indicates that Radcliff had given her to understand that he had arranged to leave Pennville with her that night, of which I can find no evidence at all. The two propositions do not hitch."

"Gee, they don't; that's right," said Steve attentively.

"I am giving you these points, Steve, that you may better appreciate the bare possibilities of the case, and be governed by them in the work I shall assign you."

"I've got them O. K., Chief O'Mara."

"It is barely possible, keep in mind, that Radcliff may be the victim of some very shrewd and well-executed plot, designed with some object yet to be discovered."

"Some cuss after his dough?"

"If that is indeed so," replied the chief, "there is but little time left before his trial in which to get at the truth."

"Here's where Lightning Willy gets in his fine work!" murmured Steve to himself.

"Now note my instructions," said Chief O'Mara earnestly. "A man lately has called upon Radcliff in prison, and has intimated that he can pull him out of his scrape, and would do it for a money consideration."

"Well, say, what is he—a magician?" asked Steve, with a grin.

"No," laughed the chief; "he hinted at some flaw in the government's case. I happen to know that this is strong enough to stand alone, however, and hence I am led to suspect that this lawyer, whose name is Michael Kirk, may have some other iron in the fire than that of a flaw in the government's case."

"Sure! It's up to him to make his little speech, and tell us where he comes in on the crime," cried Steve excitedly.

"Or the plot," said Chief O'Mara pointedly. "So bear in mind that, if there is such a plot, there probably has been no murder committed. For Kirk would not so seriously have incriminated himself for the purpose of attempting any doubtful scheme."

"Not on your life, Chief O'Mara. So Belle West may be alive?"

"I don't mean precisely that, Steve. She may have committed suicide?"

"But——"

"Wait one moment! If Radcliff is the victim of a conspiracy, which still is only a bare possibility, this man Kirk, who now comes forward with an offer to save him, may know more of what occurred on the river bank that night than we do. If he has any way of saving Radcliff other than that suggested by him, I wish to discover what it is."

"What's the game, chief?"

"I want you to look up this man; here is his card, and see what you can learn about him."

"Yes, sir."

"Watch his movements closely for the next few days, and see that nothing escapes your notice. Observe what happens, where he goes, and with whom he has relations. And take heed that you accomplish this without giving him suspicion."

"That's me, chief."

"Do it, then, and report to me."

"When shall I report, chief?"

The latter made a characteristic answer.

"When you have anything worth reporting."

"All right! Here goes!" exclaimed Steve, with youthful assurance. "If Mr. Michael Kirk really knows anything about this crime, sir, I'll get next to it, and that's no joke."

"Take heed, however, that you get into no such perilous scrape as you did with Bill Rohan," said Chief O'Mara bluntly. "I may not be on hand a second time."

Steve laughed, and turned to go.

Could he have foreseen the events of the next few days, however, he would not have had a laugh in order.

CHAPTER V.

A NIGHT MEETING.

Steve had no difficulty in locating Michael Kirk, and he found upon inquiry that this lawyer had appeared in Pennville only a few months before, and established himself in a commodious office in the Rexford Building.

He found Kirk to be a man apparently in the forties, tall and angular in figure, and with a dark, cadaverous face. The latter was lighted by a pair of crafty black eyes, so sunken under their bushy brows that they looked like two bright little balls surrounded by darkness. As may be imagined, he was not a prepossessing man.

He appeared to be a man of means, however, and occupied a well-appointed office; and Steve found upon investigation that, by availing himself of the window of a corridor in a rear building, he could look across a rear court and through the window of Kirk's office.

For two days the young detective kept this man under constant surveillance, but his vigilance resulted in no discovery of importance. Kirk came and went occasionally, but he held no intercourse with parties, either in his office or outside, and, to all intents and purposes, he appeared like a lawyer without clients.

On the morning of the third day, however, Steve discovered him upon the street, evidently bent upon some important mission. It took him to the prison, to which he easily obtained admission, and for nearly half an hour Steve waited for him to emerge, satisfied that he again had called upon Dana Radcliff.

The expression on Kirk's face when he again appeared on the street was that of a man bitterly disappointed, and in corresponding ill humor. Walking with the nervous haste of one mentally excited, he returned to his office.

Steve hastened around to the rear building, and soon gained his point of observation.

He discovered Kirk seated at his desk, with his coat and hat thrown off, and his attention engaged by a letter he was hurriedly writing. At the end of a few minutes the man sealed and addressed his communication, then abruptly sprang up and went to an electric appliance on the wall near the office door.

"That's for a messenger boy!" said Steve instantly. "Well, say, what will I be doing while that messenger boy goes along with that love letter in his hand!" and Steve edged off, resolved in his mind to get hold of the letter, if it took a leg.

By a lively sprint downstairs and around corners, Steve reached the entrance of the Rexford Building at the end of half a minute, and by chance he encountered a policeman on the sidewalk near by.

"Say, officer, look here a minute!" he cried, catching the patrolman by the arm.

"What's up?" demanded the policeman, regarding him with surprise.

"Nothing's up yet, but keep your eyes peeled!" exclaimed Steve. "Come in here a minute, will you?"

"Who are you?"

"I'm Steve Manley, see, and I am working up a case for Chief O'Mara," Steve hurriedly explained; and, quickly drawing back his coat, he displayed his badge.

"You are not the kid who ran Bill Rohan down, are you?" demanded the officer.

"That's what, and this is another hot case. Come off the street, will you?"

This put a new complexion on the request, and now the officer readily accompanied Steve into the corridor of the Rexford Building.

"What are you on now?" he demanded.

"Mum's the word, officer; the boss might kick," Steve hurriedly rejoined. "A messenger boy will come along in a minute. Somebody called for him. A party upstairs has a letter to be delivered, and I'm on to the job, understand?"

"Ah, I see!"

"I've got to get the messenger boy's uniform, see, whether it fits or not," said Steve. "You know boys, and like as not he'll try to get gay with me. I could get it all right if I put up a fight with him for it, but that

wouldn't go, do you see? I want you to come in on the deal and make him exchange suits with me."

"Go ahead—I'll lend a hand," replied the officer bluntly. "Where can you change clothes?"

"Right here in the corridor," laughed Steve. "You are big enough and broad enough to block the way, ain't you?"

"I guess that's right. And I'll close the street door against intruders."

"Wait until the messenger shows up."

"Here he is now!"

By good luck the messenger boy was about Steve's size, and after a brief explanation he consented to comply with the request, and to wait in an adjoining hotel until Steve returned from his mission.

Less than five minutes after Michael Kirk rang the call, Steve Manley, attired in the messenger's uniform, appeared at the door of the lawyer's office.

"Come in here, boy!" cried Kirk, with a sharp, rasping voice. "Do you know where Morningside Avenue is?"

"Sure, sir, since it's my biz to know!" cried Steve promptly.

"I want you to take a letter out there."

"Right, sir."

"Wait for an answer, and bring it directly back here, mind you."

"Sure thing, sir," cried Steve.

"Here's the letter. Can you read the name?"

"Sure! Mr. Sidney Barrows."

"Look sharp, then, for I shall wait here till you return."

"I'll do my prettiest, boss."

"Wait one moment!" Kirk sharply cried, as Steve turned to go. "If Mr. Barrows is not at home, ask his wife where he is."

"Yes, sir."

"And tell her to give him the letter the moment he returns, and say to him that I shall expect him to follow its directions. Can you remember that?"

"What kind of a kid do you think I am?" returned Steve curtly. "Of course I can remember it!"

"Be off, then!"

But Steve did not immediately visit Morningside Avenue. He was taking no chances of being recognized by the man and girl who possibly had noticed him in the chief's office on the morning following the crime.

Taking a taxicab, he first hastened home, and made a change sufficient to preclude recognition; and he startled the chauffeur by appearing at the end of five minutes with his hair turned to a crushed strawberry hue, and with no end of freckles adorning his roseate countenance.

"Begob, but you're not the same kid as went in, be ye?" he cried, when Steve dashed out and down the steps.

"Go to the head, chauffeur!" cried Steve, laughing. "Say, take me to Morningside Avenue on the run, see, and drop me around the corner nearest the West's."

"Faith, an' I'll do that, me bye!"

Ten minutes later Steve rang the bell at the West dwelling, and waited an answer.

The house was quite a pretentious wooden residence, with a broad piazza front and side, and a deep yard, with flower beds and several fruit trees. The adjoining dwellings were somewhat removed by the surrounding grounds, and the indications were that West had been a man of at least comfortable means.

Steve waited some time before his ring was answered; and once he thought he detected a movement of the lace draperies at one of the parlor windows, as if some person was peering out to survey the waiting caller before responding.

Then the door was opened by the palefaced sewing-machine agent, whom Steve had seen in the chief's office with Josie West.

"Mr. Barrows, sir?" cried Steve inquiringly.

"Yes."

Before Barrows had finished reading the missive, the voice of Josie West, or Josie Barrows, as she now must be called, was heard from within the hall.

"What is it, Sidney?"

"Ah, there! They don't seem dead easy over this," thought Steve, watching the doubtful expression on Barrows' delicate face.

The latter turned and partly closed the door before replying, yet Steve heard him rejoin:

"A note from Mr. Kirk, Josie."

"What does he want?"

"He wishes me to meet him to-night at—wait a bit, dear! I will show it to you later."

Then Barrows again opened the door and said to Steve:

"Are you to return to the party who sent this?"

"Yes, sir, right away."

"Tell him I will be there as requested. There is no need of writing it.'

"Not a bit, sir! I'll tell him you will be—where, sir?" inquired Steve innocently.

"He'll know where!" exclaimed Barrows, with a quick frown showing about his luminous dark eyes, as if he resented any inquisitive sentiment on the part of the messenger. "Just say to him that I will be there."

"Right, sir!" cried Steve, touching his cap and turning down the steps.

"And I'll be there, too!" Steve said to himself, as he hastened back to the cab awaiting him around a near corner.

"It's long odds that Chief O'Mara has hit the nail on the head!" he further reasoned during his return ride. "Or why the deuce are these people and this lawyer, who claims he can pull Radcliff out of his trouble, so close with each other? On the face of it, Josie West don't want Radcliff pulled out of this scrape; and if Kirk really comes this game, it is odds of a hundred to one that there's some secret scheme between them.

"And it's equal odds that I ferret out the scheme!" Steve concluded, with a determination quite equal to the occasion.

He was not obliged to return to his lodgings for the purpose of removing his disguise; he accomplished that in the taxicab. And at the end of rather more than the half hour stated he again appeared at the office of Michael Kirk, and delivered Barrows' message.

"You've been gone long enough," snarled the lawyer, when paying him the customary fee. "I ought to owe you this for a time, on the same principle."

"Is that so?" retorted Steve indifferently. "It's easy to get even."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Try it and see!"

Kirk glared sharply at him from out of his sunken eyes for a moment, then dropped the coins into Steve's extended hand.

"Don't try being fresh with me, youngster!" he said warningly. "If you do, you will get the worst of it."

"I'd take my chances," returned Steve, as he shot out through the door.

A run to the hotel, and another quick change with the genuine messenger, were speedily accomplished; and Steve then settled down to watch Kirk until he made his next move. It was very evident that the lawyer had arranged a meeting with Barrows that evening, and Steve had no idea of losing sight of him before that meeting occurred.

He felt that he could not take time even to return and report to Chief O'Mara.

At five o'clock Kirk left his office and went to his hotel to dinner, which gave Steve also a chance to dine.

It came about eight in the evening; but not until a half hour later did Kirk set forth from the hotel, evidently upon the mission for which Steve vigilantly had watched and waited.

Just as the city clocks were striking nine the lawyer arrived at a small, isolated boathouse on the bank of the Allegheny, some distance above the Forty-third Street bridge, and on the bank opposite that on which the crime had been committed.

Steve was not far behind him, yet was compelled to be exceedingly careful in order to escape observation.

"Here's a go!" he thought, on observing the scene; "hang it if I don't think this fellow does know most about the little game on that farther bank that night, just as the boss suspects! It would have been dead easy to have slipped over there in a boat. Like as not he put Belle West out of the way himself."

"Hello! there's Barrows!"

The latter exclamation was caused by seeing the sewing-machine agent's slight figure appear on the river bank fifty feet away. Both men were only dimly discernible standing there, with their figures outlined against the darker background; yet Steve could see plainly enough that they were shaking hands.

"Friends!" he muttered. "Hang it! I wish I could get near enough to overhear them."

To attempt this, however, was to take too long a chance of disobeying Chief O'Mara's instructions. It would have been impossible to have approached nearer without being discovered.

For a quarter hour the two men stood nearly motionless, engaged in subdued and earnest conversation.

Then Steve was struck by an idea.

"Barrows will surely tell his wife all about this meeting just as soon as he returns home," he said to himself. "If I can get into their house on the quiet before he gets home I may learn the whole business. It's worth a try, all right, all right, and I'll make it!"

He did not wait to see if the men parted. Leaving them still standing on the river bank, he started off posthaste in the direction of the West dwelling.

TO BE CONTINUED.

DREAMING AND HEALTH.

Dreams which are the result of mental anxiety, overbrainwork, or too great concentration during waking hours upon a single subject, are highly injurious because they entirely destroy that state of quiescent repose which is absolutely necessary for the restoration of the brain tissue exhausted during the day. As a natural consequence, they leave the brain, and therefore the whole nervous system, debilitated and unfit for any sustained effort. The ordinary dream, to which the healthiest people may be regularly subject, nearly always occurs during the few moments that precede waking, and is, in fact, a sort of reflection of the transition state between waking and sleeping. Such dreams are entirely harmless.

DANGEROUS FUN.

By W. M.

One dull and cheerless night in February, a party of five or six of us were assembled at the house of my grandmother. After the tea table had been cleared away, we all set to work to amuse ourselves as best we could, by playing the game of "snake."

The game, however, soon proved dull and uninteresting, so we abandoned it for more congenial pleasure—story telling.

Lottie proposed it, and the motion was unanimously carried that granny should lead off.

The old lady at first demurred; but after considerable persuasion she consented to favor us with one, if we would wait until she put a little more coal on the fire, to which we all agreed.

After the stove was duly coaled, granny took off her specs and commenced:

"The story I am about to tell happened a great many years ago, before any of you were ever thought of. When I was a young girl, about seventeen years old, I lived with a good old Quaker family named Halleck. The family consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Halleck, John Halleck, their son, and Mary Sprague. Mary was Mr. Halleck's niece, his sister's daughter, and an orphan—her parents having died when she was quite young.

"She was a wild and thoughtless girl, and always ready for a 'spree.'

"Not far distant from Mr. Halleck's lived a young man named Amos Jones. He called frequently at the Hallecks', at first to see John; but it soon became apparent that his visits were more on account of Mary. John, noticing this, often spoke to Mary, saying he guessed Amos had fallen in love with her.

"'Well,' she would say, 'I reckon he will have to fall out again.'

"So matters stood for about three months, when one Sunday, while the old folks were at church, and had left Mary and me at home to superintend the domestic affairs, who should come but Amos. Mary saw him coming down the lane leading to the house, and said she was going to have a little fun. So she ran to the kitchen and took John's blunderbuss, which he had carelessly left there the day before, went to the window, and pointed it at him, saying:

"'What brought you here?'

"Scarcely had she uttered the words, when bang! went the gun, and she, with a screech, fell senseless to the floor.

"I was so frightened that I could neither move nor speak. When I came to myself, I saw Amos leaning over her. By our united efforts, we at length succeeded in partially reviving her. In this state, she was carried to her bed, while Amos ran for a physician. The doctor was soon

on hand, and administered such restoratives as the case demanded. It was three weeks before Mary left her couch, and sat up in the old easy-chair. At the expiration of that time she began to gain rapidly.

"In just twelve weeks thereafter she became the wife of Amos Jones, and lived to spend many happy years in connubial felicity."

THE FIEND BROTHER.

By H. J. MORRIS.

The 10th of August shone out brightly, and at an early hour the tocsin rung out its alarm peal over the terrified inhabitants of the city of Paris. In some of the parishes those who were well disposed toward the king, attempted to obey this summons, but the well-prepared Jacobins put down all opposition and compelled them to remain at home. However, the king gathered around him his faithful "Swiss Guard," and some old veterans who succeeded in answering to the peal of the alarm bell. There were here assembled in the Tuileries men sixty and eighty years old, whom the queen importuned, with tears in her eyes, to save themselves while yet they had time. She told them their strength would be nothing in comparison with what the Jacobins would bring with them to take the Tuileries by storm; but in vain, they were determined to died for their king and country, and they did die like men, those gray-haired old veterans of three and fourscore years. In a short time was heard the outward march of the enemy, and shortly after their bayonets were seen glistening high in the air, while they marched on with the steady tramp of men sure of an easy victory.

A few minutes before they approached the gates of the Tuileries, one of these old veterans before mentioned turned to his companion, and said:

"Maurice, I know that I can depend on you to do this for me. If I happen to be shot down by those rascally Jacobins, and you survive me, I would ask it as a favor that you will go to my wife and tell her I died honorably in the defense of my king and country."

The report of a gun put an end to their further conversation, though from which side it was fired nobody knew. Immediately the fight became general, and the Swiss Guards were gaining rapidly, and succeeded in cutting their way through the enemy's ranks, and had they been ably supported by a body of cavalry, would have succeeded in wringing victory from the enemy's grasp.

There was left for Louis but one alternative, that of putting himself at the head of his troops, or of submitting himself to the decrees of the assembly.

He had already taken the latter course, and with his wife, sister, and children proceeded to the assembly, amid a body of the Swiss Guards.

But to return to the old man.

At last when the fight was over and the remainder of the Swiss had lain down their arms at the command of Louis, and when those who were not butchered by the infuriated mob were taken prisoners, Maurice remembered his promise to the old man, and proceeded back to the Tuileries, hoping that his friend might have escaped in the crowd. When he reached there the first object that presented itself to his eyes was the form of his old friend, which barely retained the breath of life. Thinking to preserve his life and escape through the crowd, he lifted him on his shoulder and hurried out into the open air, with the old man on his shoulder.

He had not proceeded far, however, when he was discovered by some Blues, and receiving a well-aimed blow from one of their clubs was instantly felled to the earth, falling heavily over the body of the dying old soldier, and crushing him to death. The ruffians then believing him to be done for, left him, and turned in another direction. As soon as the wounded man saw them departing, he raised himself on his elbow, and, looking about him, he noticed a woman looking inquiringly at the dead and wounded, and instantly recognized her as the wife of his friend. He called to her in a low, feeble voice; when, coming closer, she also recognized him as the friend of her husband. She knelt down by the wounded man, and lifting his head was about questioning him about her husband, when a bayonet was thrust down his throat, and the thrust was accompanied with a fierce oath. On looking up she beheld as the murderer her eldest son, and fell back in a swoon over the body of her husband, whom she instantly recognized to be the corpse on which the dead man was stretched out.

The young man recognized his mother, and lifting her in his arms carried her across the street, and hiring a coach had her conveyed to their own house. On arriving at the house the door was opened by a young man about eighteen or twenty years old, with a bright and intelligent countenance. On seeing his mother in this condition, he exclaimed, in a tone of deep grief:

"Oh! Jean, Jean, what has happened to our mother, or is it dead she is?"

"No," answered the other, "she has only fainted. I was passing by the palace, and seeing her looking at some of those royalists who were heaped in the street, I approached her, and she, having just recognized my father under the body of the dying prisoner, fainted. So I took her in my arms and procured a carriage to convey her hither."

The mother never recovered from this swoon, and was buried next day by the two brothers in as decent a manner as the time and circumstances permitted. They could never recover the body of the father.

* * * * * * *

Jean and Jules de Granville were very different natures.

Jean, the oldest, was a man of morose and selfish nature, and very much feared on account of his undying hatred of those whom he supposed to be his enemies. Jules was a very different character from his brother. He was a tall and handsome young man, of a generous and forgiving nature. He had but recently returned from the university, where he had been sent to complete his studies for the ecclesiastical state, but he could no longer continue on the breaking out of the revolution.

But to resume.

"Jean," said Jules, the day after the funeral, "what did you mean the day before yesterday in speaking of the royalists as you did, or did you really mean what you said?"

"Why not," answered his brother; "I wish I could dispatch the whole rascally crew with my single arm."

Jules was thunderstruck at these words, and almost doubting the reality of what he heard, he asked:

"Jean, have I understood you rightly?"

"Yes," answered the other doggedly.

Jules, when he heard this, proceeded to his own room, and, packing up a bundle of his own clothes, and taking some money which he had in his trunk, silently departed without even bidding farewell to his brother.

* * * * * * *

Neither heard any intelligence of the other for some years. One cold morning in the beginning of winter the Vendeans, who were now in a most deplorable condition for want of food and clothing, received an account from one of their scouts of the massacre of several of their families by a party of Blues, or republicans, who were then making their escape through the woods back again to Nantes. The royalists immediately set out in pursuit, vowing deadly vengeance against the Blues.

They all took an oth, that during the battle they would take no prisoners, nor give any quarter. They soon overtook the Blues, and a fight ensuing, the Vendeans, who constantly exhorted one another to remember the massacre of their wives and families, being animated by revenge, took no prisoners, but after killing and wounding more than one-half the enemy, compelled the remainder to fly for their lives, pursuing them even to the very walls of Nantes.

As they were returning they saw on the way before them a man, who had the appearance of a republican, and who fled and endeavored to hide himself among the bushes, and thus escape.

But the Vendeans, who were fleet of foot, soon overtook him, and carried him prisoner to their camp, there to pronounce sentence of death upon him.

On arriving at their camp, the Vendeans rested on their arms, and prepared to execute sentence of death on the unhappy prisoner.

Their captain, a handsome young man, had not raised his head once to look at the prisoner since his capture, but looked sad and gloomy, now raised his eyes to the prisoner's face, and, recognizing his wretched brother in the prisoner, threw himself on his neck, and wept like a child. But the Blue, repulsing him rudely, exclaimed:

"Begone from me; you need not pretend to love me, for I know you hate me; but not more than I hate and despise you."

"Oh, Jean, Jean!" exclaimed Jules wildly. "Do not say so. I swear, by all my hopes of happiness, that I love you."

"Well, then prove it by sending me to Nantes."

"Stand back, captain!" exclaimed the soldiers, "until we shoot the prisoner."

"Not until you have shot me first," exclaimed Jules. "It shall never be said there was a Cain in our ranks."

"Stand back, or we will shoot you both dead!" they exclaimed angrily.

"Never!" exclaimed Jules. "I will die with my brother."

At this moment, the chaplain came up, and, having a great influence with the soldiers, after some time succeeded in obtaining the release of the prisoner.

Jules, almost frantic with joy, was profuse in his thanks to the chaplain, while his brother stood moodily by, and a few moments after silently took his departure, without so much as even thanking his brother, or the chaplain.

* * * * * * * *

Time passed on, and with it passed the good fortune of the grand army of the Vendeans. So that at last they were compelled to separate, at least for a time, until some opportunity offered of taking the field under more advantageous circumstances.

Jules, determined to go to his brother at Nantes, and there seek an asylum until he could find means to escape the fury of the republicans. With this hope he set out for Nantes, traveling by night and hiding himself in the bushes by day. At the end of three days he arrived at Nantes late in the evening, and, repairing immediately to his brother's house, timidly knocked at the door, and on it being opened by Jean, Jules made known to him the condition of affairs.

"And what is it you want me to do?" demanded the Blue, in a rough, haughty manner.

"I only want you," answered Jules, "to grant me a temporary asylum until I can manage to escape hence, and I hope you will grant me this favor, my dear brother; and God grant no evil come of it to you."

"Sit down," answered the Blue, "while I get my cap and cloak and accompany you."

"But, my dear brother," said Jules, "why not here? why not in your own house? Where would you fetch me, or have me go?"

"Do you not want an asylum?" said the Blue.

"Yes," answered Jules; "but I thought you would keep me in your own house, at least, for a time."

"Well, come along," said Jean, and, seizing him by the arm, he hurried out into the cold, chill night air, dragging with him his hungry, weary, and almost broken-hearted brother. They went on at a rapid pace, turning up one street and down another, until the Blue stopped before a large and splendid-looking house, and muttering a few words to the porter, which no one but himself heard, he let him pass in.

They entered a large and richly furnished room, and the Blue, ringing a bell, a servant immediately entered, and on the republican inquiring for an interview with the master of the house, she immediately disappeared.

Not many minutes after her departure, the door was again opened, and a man entered and with a haughty voice demanded of the Blue what he wanted with him.

The Blue, not in the least dismayed, pointed to his brother, and answered:

"I came to deliver to you this man, who is a brigand and a captain in the royalist party.

"How do you know this?" asked the man, who was none other than Carrier, the bloodstained wretch, and the fear of all honest citizens.

"He himself has told me so; and he is my brother!" answered the Blue.

"Your brother!" exclaimed Carrier, starting back with horror, wretch as he was.

"Yes," answered the other; "and now I have done my duty, you will, I hope, do yours," said the Blue, with a sardonic smile.

Carrier knew by these words that if he failed to do his duty, he would be reported to the committee of public safety, and his natural love of blood, coming to his aid, he turned to the Blue, and said:

"Be at the place of execution to-morrow at nine o'clock, and you shall see how handsomely I treat the enemies of the republicans."

The unhappy young officer knew his fate well enough without hearing these last words, and, merely turning to the wretched fratricide, he said:

"Adieu, my brother; and may God forgive you as I forgive you."

Immediately after he was conveyed to prison, where he remained all night praying for his unnatural brother.

Early next morning he was brought out to be guillotined amid a crowd of horror-stricken spectators, who could scarcely credit their senses, as they saw the wretched fratricide standing by and looking calmly on the scene of his brother's death.

The execution of the royalist at length took place amid the sobs and cries of the people, and the young officer was thus condemned to a felon's death by his own brother.

Early next day the report was spread around the town that the miserable fratricide was also a suicide.

And thus his guilty soul soon appeared before the Judge of judges to answer for his innocent brother's death.

FISHING BIRDS.

The wonderful ingenuity and patience of the Chinese is well shown by the skillful way in which he has trained the cormorant to fish for him. The bird is taken when young, and then, with infinite care, taught to catch fish for its owners. A metal ring is placed round its neck, fitting close enough to prevent it from swallowing the larger fish, yet sufficiently loose to allow the small ones to pass down its throat—its reward for working. A sort of harness is rigged about the body of the bird, by means of which it is lowered into the sea and lifted out again into the boat. A cord of spruce fiber, about a dozen feet in length, prevents the bird from straying too far, while it also enables the fisherman to control and guide its movements. The fishing is always done at night, and this is the reason why it is difficult to get a good set of pictures of cormorant fishing. When all is ready, the birds are lowered into the water, and as soon as they have filled their capacious mouths they are pulled into the boat and the fish they have been unable to swallow taken away from them. They are then put back into the water, and so the fishing continues. Torches are used to illumine the scene; it is the light, of course, which attracts the fish. A well-trained cormorant will catch 100 to 150 good-sized fish an hour—a record that leaves the average human angler hopelessly beaten.

ANTS BAKE BISCUITS.

The extraordinary habits of the harvester ant have long been known to naturalists. Certain species not only harvest in store in granaries the seeds upon which they feed, but actually plant and cultivate an annual crop of their food seeds.

Still more remarkable stories are told of an ant that is common in Dalmatia, the Messor barbaus. According to Doctor Neger, of the Dresden Forestry School, this ant not only cuts leaves and gathers seeds, but actually makes bread or biscuit! The seeds are first sprouted, then carried into the sun and dried, and then taken back to the underground chambers, where they are chewed into a dough. The dough is then finally made into tiny cakes, which are baked in the sun, then carefully stored for future use.

From these observations it would appear that the art of cookery is not confined to the human race. All cooking is done by the sun, whether in the ripening of fruit or in the baking of bread in a stove. The heat obtained from fuel is simply stored up sunlight set free.

The Arab and the native Mexican speak of ripe fruit and fruit which has been cooked in the sun. The ant has somehow learned the art of sun cookery, the saliva with which it moistens the grain probably taking the place of yeast and sweetening through changes set up by its influence upon starch.

HER SMILES WERE NOT FOR "FLASHY."

"I got a good one on Flashy," said Squirt, as he shot the fine stream into the ice-cream soda and pushed it over the marble counter.

"Who and what?" asked Squirt's friend.

"You know Flashy," continued Squirt. "He of the ice-cream suit and high-browed hat. He was sittin' in here this afternoon when up floats the classiest little dame you ever saw and stops right outside the window. She cocks her head over on one side and smiles, her face right up close to the glass. Flashy tightened up his wash tie and straightened up his coat lapels. All the time the girl was smilin' and rubbin' her nose with the palm of her hand.

"Flashy smiled back two or three times, and then he up and dusts out the door. Right up to her he went and purses up his pretty lips and lifts his hat. Say, you ought to have seen that girl do the rockbound glide away. She elevated her nose on a level with her eyes and drifted right off down the street.

"Flashy was crushed. The woman had a powder rag palmed in her hand. She had been smilin' at herself in the plate glass."—*Kansas City Times.*

GLASS MOST ELASTIC BODY.

Glass is one of the most interesting, as well as one of the most peculiar things, in the world. It has curious and contradictory qualities, and many astonishing phenomena are connected with it. Brittle and breakable as it is, yet it exceeds almost all other bodies in elasticity.

If two glass balls are made to strike each other at a given force, the recoil, by virtue of their elasticity, will be nearly equal to their original impetus. Connected with its brittleness are some very singular facts.

Take a hollow sphere, with a hole, and stop the hole with the finger, so as to prevent the external and internal air from communicating, and the sphere will fly to pieces by the mere heat of the hand.

Vessels made of glass that have been suddenly cooled possess the curious property of being able to resist hard blows given to them from without, but will be instantly shivered by a small particle of flint dropped into their cavities.

This property seems to depend upon the comparative thickness of the bottom; the thicker the bottom is, the more certainty of breakage by this experiment.

Some of these vessels, it is stated, have resisted the stroke of a mallet given with sufficient force to drive a nail into wood, and heavy bodies, such as musket balls, pieces of iron, bits of wood, jasper, stone, et cetera, have been cast into them from a height of two or three feet without any effect, yet a fragment of flint not larger than a pea dropped from a height of three inches made them fly to pieces.

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

"Bad Man" Dies in Prison.

Death has freed "Bill" Miner, notorious robber and jail breaker, from his last prison term. His picturesque career, which included clashes with the laws of more than a score of States and several Canadian provinces, has ended at the Georgia State prison farm.

Miner's criminal career began nearly sixty years ago. He left his home in Jackson County, Kentucky, before he was 15 years old and went West. He admitted numerous stagecoach robberies and train holdups, and was several times imprisoned for robbing banks. Three years ago he was brought to the prison farm for robbing a train near Lulu, Ga.

Dog Protects Children.

While herding their father's cattle on the prairie, near Rexford, Kan., the other day, Willie and Pearl Armstrong, 9 and 7 years old, respectively, and their dog companion had a bitter fight with a large coyote.

The dog to protect the children, attacked the wolf, and was about to get the worst of the fight when Willie, with a broom handle, and Pearl, with a small stick, went into the battle. They pelted the animal over the head and shoulder until it fell unconscious and the faithful dog killed it.

The children's father sold the ears of his wolfship to the county clerk for $1, which was divided between his sons.

Halts Recruiting for Gunwomen.

Recruiting for the corps of gunwomen of the Women's Social and Political Union, of England, has come to a standstill for the reason that the authorities, alarmed at the growing number of women asking permission to bear arms, have declined to issue any more licenses to women. Nevertheless, no less than 300 licenses to carry arms had been issued to members of the W. S. P. U. before this restricted measure was adopted.

It is believed that this disquieting information supplemented by news from Scotland Yard that militants had erected a pistol range near London, caused the home office to make overtures for the present truce between the government and the Pankhurst forces.

His Reward to Last a Whole, Sweet Year.

In front of Sammie Rosenbaum, who's twelve and appetiteful and honest and lives at No. 235 East Fourth Street, New York, there stretches a 365-day vista of pure delight.

Read on!

Sammie recently, as is his morning custom, took his daily spending allowance of a nickel and planked it down on the counter in front of John Doukas, who runs at No. 59 Avenue B an ice-cream shop, and demanded "Veneller!"

As he got about to the middle of the mound his teeth closed upon something hard. He removed it, chucked it on

Doukas protested that he never let ice get into his ice cream. Sammie looked down upon the floor and replied: "It ain't ice, either; it's a hunk o' glass I bit on." He stooped and picked it up.

"Oh, Sammie! Gimme it! Gimme it!" shouted John. "Oh, you're a swell kid, Sammie! That ain't glass. It's my best dimunt that I paid $200 for and I lost it and I never think I would see it again!"

Sammie turned it over, and sure enough, it was a big stud that John had long saved up for. He had worn it one afternoon while making the "veneller," and it had worked loose. He looked for it everywhere else except in the ice cream.

"I'll give you money, Sammie. I'll give you anything you want," he said.

"Aw, I don't want no money," said Sammie.

"Well, then, Sammie, you will pay for no more ice cream. Here's your nickel back, and every day for a year you come in and eat all you want and pick out a nickel's worth of candy, too."

They shook hands over the bargain, and it went into effect at once.

Lone Man Building Railroad.

Out on the prairie to the north of Dodge City, Kan., is being built the strangest railroad in America. One man is building it all by himself, and it runs from nowhere to nowhere.

Rudolph Meyer is the promoter, president, purchasing agent, civil engineer, superintendent, construction boss, crew, mule skinner, and water boy.

There are no trains running yet. There isn't even any track laid. But there are five miles of perfectly good grade ready for the ties and rails, and there will be more of it as long as Meyer's money, mules, and strength last. What the purpose is nobody knows but Meyer, and he won't tell.

In the spring of 1908 this old German appeared in the Spring Creek Valley, north of the Hodgman County line, and asked a farmer to sell him a strip of land for a railroad right of way. He declared that he was the sole builder of the line, and was not backed by any railroad company.

The wondering farmer sold him the land, and he started to work with a team of mules, a wagon, and one scraper. In a year or so he finished the grade on the strip he had bought and purchased more land from the neighboring farm to continue his line.

Year after year he toiled on, pushing ahead with his leveling, cutting, and filling, absolutely alone, with his single mule team and scraper, and whenever he has reached the end of his right of way he has demanded the next strip of land and paid the price.

It is a tremendous job that this man has tackled single-handed. One of his fills is 70 feet high—a great dike of dirt hauled into place slowly, month after month, a little scraperful at a time. Just ahead of him is another deep

When asked why he chose this location for a railroad, he answers: "Oh, I just picked out an easy place to build one."

The roadbed runs in a northeasterly direction, and if it were being built in the usual way, by railroad men, the purpose would seem to be the connection of Dodge City, several miles to the southwest, with Jetmore, a village to the northeast. The Santa Fe has a branch to Jetmore, running west from Great Bend, and this connection would make a loop with the main line. But Meyer declares he has nothing at all to do with the Santa Fe, and his peculiar methods seem to bear him out.

He lives alone in a little cook shack, which he moves along as the work advances. When the weather is fine he works all day, and when the ground is frozen or water-soaked he loafs in his shack.

Meyer is trying now to buy some more right of way, and the owners are holding him up, hoping to force him to tell his real plans. But Meyer just plugs along patiently, without saying a word and apparently without worrying.

"They can't stop this railroad," he says.

Crack Pitcher's Strange Diet.

Walter "Smokeball" Johnson, monarch of the mound, is pitching himself to glory on a diet of pudding, sherbet, cake, and iced tea. Perhaps no other pitcher in the history of the game ever performed so valiantly on so weak a diet, yet Johnson never indulges in more food at noon than pudding, sherbet, cake, and iced tea.

"I don't believe in eating much," says Walter, "before going out to the ball park. Overloading the stomach is bad for a player. I like pudding and cake. The sherbet or ice cream is soothing to the stomach, and so is the iced tea. Then when I come back to the hotel I eat my heartiest meal of the day.

"Does so much iced stuff hurt me? I think not. I used to have a lot of ice-cream sodas during a day. Milan and I were known as the ice-cream-soda boys a year or so ago, you know, but we've cut all that out. I like ice cream and sherbet just as much as ever, but I keep myself down to one order at noon and another at night."

Ty Cobb as a Manager.

That Tyrus Raymond Cobb, who tops all outfielders of all time in altitude of salary, as well as in batting percentages in past years, will be the next manager of the St. Louis Americans, is a rumor that should titilate one's risibilities—slang for giving it the ha-ha!

Asking the question of the Detroit management, elicited gentle denials and pitying smiles as if, in the opinion of Navin, the person who could harbor such a thought had a mind as big as the soul of a turnip.

In addition to the official denials of any intent to let Cobb go are three strong arguments against the going of Cobb to St. Louis.

First, Detroit needs Cobb for his value to the club not only as a player, but as a box-office aid.

Second, Cobb could not be induced to accept responsibility as a manager when he is drawing larger pay than most leaders for merely playing ball as a private.

Third, Cobb's disposition is such that he could never be a success as a leader.

And to these three we might add that Hedges hasn't any playing assets he could part with of sufficient value to make up to Detroit the loss of Cobb.

Cobb is a great drawing card. He is the one asset that lures fans to see the broken-down Tigers perform during these dull days in the jungle. His drawing capacity alone earns his salary several times over. The Detroit management admits this.

Nor is it likely that Cobb would add to his gray hairs by taking over the leadership of a discredited team like the Browns. His salary now is almost double what the present leader of the Browns draws, so he should worry and get a wrinkle over the problems of a club leader.

Cobb has not a single apparent quality except a quick mind that would help him to success as a member of a major-league club. He is wanting in diplomacy, in leadership, in magnetism of the sort that holds men and in the ability to impart knowledge. Not only can this be inferred from his acts, but men thrown with him almost daily during the season testify to it.

Instead of drawing men to him his general bearing and disposition push them from him. He lacks utterly those qualities needed in the advancement of team spirit.

A Detroit newspaper man who has been with the team since Cobb became a power, expressed the following opinion:

"Cobb is Cobb alone. Cobb plays Cobb's game. Cobb thinks too fast to secure coöperation on plays, and hence is constantly in friction with his teammates. His make-up is suited only to individual effort, not to dovetailing in with others to the general advancement. Take him from any viewpoint, you cannot figure where Cobb could make even a fair leader."

Which about tells the story of Cobb's unfitness for the job.

To Study Drift in Antarctic.

J. Foster Stackhouse, when interviewed recently on the new antarctic expedition, explained his plans as far as he had made them.

"It was while I was assisting Captain Scott in 1910 in arranging his last expedition to the south pole that the idea came to me. I am setting out simply to explore land which no Englishman has ever trod.

"Our main object will be to determine the question of drift and the extent of King Edward VII.'s Land. In addition there are many problems beyond ice drift, for temperature and magnetic observations are dependent to a very large extent upon knowing what is the Ross Sea.

"I expect to start from London some time in August next year, and make our course to the south via Punta Arenas. We should reach the ice about New Year's Day."

Players' Fraternity Not Allied With Any League.

Persistent reports to the effect that the Baseball Players' Fraternity was about to become allied with the Federal League were set at rest recently by a statement made by David L. Fultz, president of the fraternity, in which Fultz declares that his organization would make no alliance with any faction whatever in the baseball world. The statement says, in part:

"If there is to be a war among baseball magnates they must fight it out themselves. As an organization we refuse absolutely to be drawn into the controversy. I admit, however, having had one conference with Mr. Fogel

within the last four weeks, as well as others with gentlemen in no way connected with Mr. Fogel.

"There seems to be an abundance of money ready for investment in the baseball business, but this can have no effect upon our determination of maintaining a position of neutrality as long as there is a possibility of obtaining a square deal from the magnates.

"We have not only been turned down in our appeal to the National Commission, but we have been told that our wrongs do not exist, although we see them every day. It is my personal opinion that the commission has committed a very grave error. This, however, is its own affair."

Would Lose Toes for Ease.

To escape working a sentence on the county farm, near Little Rock, Ark., Robert Howe attempted to cut off his toes with a razor he had concealed upon his person.

When Howe was photographed for identification several weeks ago he attempted to foil efforts of detectives to obtain a good likeness by removing his right eye of glass and smashing it on the floor. Howe is said to be wanted in Omaha, Lincoln, and Chicago for alleged safe-cracking jobs.

New Army Law Lenient to Germans in America.

Under the new military laws Germany is to-day calling on over 100,000 more of her sons each year to serve in the army. The new regulations, however, create conditions under which German subjects living abroad may escape military service entirely, and in this regard they are of interest to Germans living in the United States.

The laws provide that German subjects who have obtained permission to postpone their military service on account of residence abroad and who have acquired a permanent position here may, upon application to the proper authorities, be excused entirely from active service and transferred to the "landsturm," or militia, which is called upon only in time of actual invasion. The exemption is granted only on condition that entering the army would jeopardize either the position or invested capital of the emigrant and that there is reason to believe that the applicant is not trying deliberately to evade military service.

Officers or officials living abroad may now be granted leave for two years and excused from returning for the usual military duties, subject only to the obligation of returning in case of a general mobilization, and this leave may be extended indefinitely upon presentation of a consular certificate that the applicant has a permanent position as merchant, business manager, et cetera. The officer whose life work is found in America or another country outside of Europe and the Mediterranean lands may even be excused from returning upon mobilization, though, of course, it is almost inconceivable to think of a German officer taking advantage of this in case of war.

Say Players Earn Their Big Wages.

Ty Cobb, the Detroit Tigers' famous outfielder, is said to be valued at $268,000.

Cobb's salary is $12,500 a year. The other day it was reported that he had been "sold" to the New York Yankees. Frank Farrell, owner of the Yankees, promptly denied the rumor, but said that he would like to get a chance to buy him for $50,000 or $60,000. The word "buying" means merely buying the privilege of hiring the player. Sixty thousand dollars is a good deal, but the figures would be higher if Cobb were auctioned off among the big-league club owners.

Ty is considered the greatest player in the world, in batting, outfielding, base running, and thinking. He plays mostly with his brains, and no baseball expert denies that he is worth what he gets,

Frank Chance, of the New York Yankees, who became famous as leader of the Chicago Cubs, says that expensive ball players usually "deliver the goods."

Chance recently paid $10,000 for Maisel, a third baseman, and he says he did it because he believed Maisel to be worth ten $1,000 players.

"You've got to pay them big salaries to keep them going," he explained. "I'd rather have five $5,000-a-year men on my club than fifty $2,000-a-year men. The high-priced man usually plays major-league ball."

This season Chance is having his first experience with a helpless, losing club, but by next year he hopes to have the Yankee team built up so well that it will figure in the pennant race.

Eight years ago Chance was made manager of the Chicago Cubs. At that time he had a bank account of $7,000. When Charles Taft, Charles Murphy, and others purchased the Chicago team they declared Chance in for 10 per cent of the stock. He paid for it with his dividends. To-day Chance admits he's worth $200,000.

For looking into the lens of a moving-picture camera for twenty-five minutes recently he was paid $1,000. His salary for this season was $25,000. He owns a thirty-four-acre orange grove in California, and modestly calculates that his income for the year should be around $55,000. These are his own figures.

Ashes of Dead to Be Used for Portraits.

Portraits made from human ashes will soon become a fad, according to Myron Root, a Denver, Colo., artist. He has just completed a picture which he calls "The Awakening," portraying a young woman waking from the death sleep. He made several pictures from cigar ashes before trying one from the ashes of a young woman recently cremated.

Root says he works the ash pictures on a base of plastic cement. He suggests that persons having relatives dead will have their ashes made into portraits instead of putting them in graves or vaults.

Kept Coin as Honor Medal.

Among the most cherished treasures of the late General de Negrier, of France, was a simple five-franc piece to which hangs a heroic tale. When the general was in command of the foreign legion in 1883 a slight disturbance broke out among his men at Side Abbes. A squadron of chasseurs came in haste from the neighboring garrison of Bab Menire to support the general, but he sent them back, having, as he said, no need of any help to "keep his lads in order."

Accompanied by a single drummer, he entered the quarters of the legion, and summoned the mutineers before him.

"Who was the ringleader?" he asked sternly. A man came forward and saluted. "It was I, general," he said simply.

"Your name and nationality?" was the next question, and "Hans Bacher, German," was the reply.

"Why did you strike the Arabs?" the inquiry proceeded. "Because they called us dogs of Frenchmen," returned the legionary.

"Good!" said De Negrier shortly; "you have been frank. I shall not punish you. And here are five francs for having defended the honor of the flag you serve."

Two years ago sixty legionaries fell before the enemy in Tongkin. On one of the dead bodies was found a package addressed to General de Negrier. It was the five-franc piece, with a sheet of paper on which were written these words: "Take back, my general, the coin, which I have retained as a medal of honor till my death." The note was signed Hans Bacher, soldier of the legion.

Absolute-death Test Announced.

A remarkable new method of testing absolutely whether an apparently dead person is really dead and thus avoiding the possibility of premature burial, just announced by Doctor Icard, of Marseilles, France, has been received with great interest by his colleagues in Paris.

Doctor Icard's system depends on the question whether the blood is still in circulation or not, and consists of a subcutaneous injection of a small quantity of fluorescine, which is quite harmless, but one of the most violent coloring matters known.

If there be the slightest motion of the blood, the fluorescine, carried around the body, stains it a vivid golden yellow, while the eyes become a deep emerald green. If, on the other hand, there is no movement of the blood, the coloring matter is not dispersed, and produces no effect. Half an hour is stated to be enough to make this test.

Chemical Bombs to Fight Fires.

Firemen armed with guns and shooting "bombs" filled with powdered chemicals into blazing buildings instead of playing streams of water into burning structures may be a reality in the near future, according to Simon Kellerman, junior, statistician of the National Firemen's Association.

"I expect that the use of water for the fighting of fires will be well-nigh done away with within the next five years," he said. "At present in the large cities most of the smaller fires are put out with chemicals, and in time I believe guns for shooting powdered chemicals or chemical bombs will be used for fighting the big blazes.

"The loss of property will be much smaller when more chemicals are used. At a recent fire which I witnessed the loss on property due to the fire was about five thousand dollars, while the loss due to the water poured on the flames amounted to about twenty thousand dollars."

Music Makes Bad Men Turn Good in Prison.

Not a prisoner has been guilty of an infraction of the Ohio State's prison dining-hall rules since the eleven-piece orchestra has been entertaining the men during meal time. Recently the warden conceived the idea of having the prison orchestra play in the two dining halls. The musicians play in one hall at noon and in the other in the evening, but the two halls are so close together that the music from one can be heard in the other.

In this way nearly 1,600 convicts have the uplifting influence of music. Under the old plan, Warden Thomas said, about half the fights were started in the dining room. Good music, the warden thinks, does not necessarily mean classical music, and on each program there is a goodly sprinkling of popular music, including ragtime.

Warden Thomas is considering the advisability of forming two crack military companies. If the plan under way materializes, one company will be of white prisoners and the other of colored. Residing temporarily behind the bars are former members of the United States army and the National Guard of other States who might be used to start the two companies.

Spends 10 Cents; Gets $100.

George Dauer, proprietor of a hotel at Jamaica Avenue and Ward Street, Richmond Hill, L. I., is rejoicing in a profit of $99.99 from a ten-cent investment.

"This is no get-rich-quick scheme, but there certainly is a lot of money in clams if you have good luck," he said. "It was this way: I like clams, and when I saw some little necks in a local dealer's store I bought ten cents' worth. I opened one of the shells, detached the clam, and started to eat it. I nearly broke my teeth on a hard substance. I found it was a pearl as big as a pea. A jeweler in Manhattan gave me one hundred dollars for it. Am I fond of clams? Well, I guess yes!"

Caught a Giant Eel Wearing Dog Collar.

John Balinski, of West Warren, Conn., captured in the Quaboag River, a mile below Willimantic, a giant eel with a dog collar on its neck.

The eel was forty-seven inches long, as large around the body as the wrist of an ordinary-sized man, and weighed thirteen pounds.

Balinksi killed the eel in low water, it evidently having been caught in the pool where it was captured when the tide went out.

The collar, of the sort worn by a small dog, was securely locked about its neck, and so tight as to cause the skin to bulge out around the edge. The initials "W. R. C." and the name "Prince" were engraved on a silver nameplate.

The eel's back was badly scarred, showing where it had been speared on various occasions. Four fishhooks with lines attached were found in the monster's mouth.

"It was almost impossible for me to hold the eel after I grabbed it," said Balinski, "for it would twist and squirm about in my hands with ease. I finally got it between two stones, and, drawing my knife, cut its throat. About the only thing it is good for is to chop it up and feed it to the chickens. The collar I will keep as a souvenir."

Brainless Child Lived Three Years.

The German medical press records the remarkable case of a child which lived for nearly four years without any trace of a forebrain. Neurologists explain that the case demonstrates the absolute dependence of human beings on the fore or sentient brain, and shows that a human being cannot carry on the ordinary processes necessary for his preservation without it. The fish or frog without the forebrain has greater capability than had the child in question. This child revealed no trace whatever of this vital brain section, so its nervous system was absolutely similar to that of a fish, though the latter is capable of performing all the vital functions necessary for nutrition and self-defense.

The case of the child is especially noteworthy because of the long duration of life. In other cases the brainless life lasted only for a few days, and the movements of the

child did not differ in any respect from those of a normal child.

In the case under discussion the child lived three and three-quarter years, permitting numerous extensive observations of its state. The child remained in a condition of continual sleep. Its arms were flexed and rigid. It was unable to grasp or hold anything with its hands. From the second year onward the child cried incessantly, though this could instantly be stopped by mere pressure, especially on the head. It was impossible to note any psychical action, to awaken any feelings, or to teach the child anything.

Huge Roller-chair Industry.

Rolling-chair traffic on the Boardwalk, at Atlantic City, which has been carried into courts by suits resisting the city's attempt to levy a higher tax upon the hundreds of chairs used, is an industry that does a $500,000 business annually.

Records at city hall show that the owners last year paid to the city chair taxes amounting to $34,650. The city also received $100 each for 64 chair stands. There were licensed by the city 190 single and 1,806 double chairs.

It is estimated that the increased tax will increase the city's total revenue from the chair traffic to $60,000.

Poor Pay for German Actors.

Considering the rapid growth in the importance of the German stage in recent years, both from a national and an international point of view, the figures published as the result of the latest inquiry into stage salaries in Germany cannot fail to surprise.

As many as sixteen dramatic artists are recorded as earning $2,500 or more in a season, but, on the other hand, more than half of those who answered the inquiry gave $375 as the amount of their season's income. The table of more than 2,000 answers shows that 56 had received less than $100.

The season may be counted as eight or nine months in the year.

Richards Succeeds in Sandy Hook Swim.

The most remarkable aquatic performance ever accomplished in New York waters was made recently when Samuel Richards, junior, the long-distance swimmer, of Boston, representing the L Street Swimming Club, and a registered athlete of the New England Branch Amateur Athletic Union, swam from the Battery to Sandy Hook and then began a return trip, swimming one mile on the homeward journey before he abandoned the attempt. He covered the actual distance between the Hook and the Battery, twenty-two miles, in eight hours and twelve minutes, which time reduces that of Commodore Alfred Brown, a local professional life-saver, the first man to achieve the task, by almost five hours.

Ideal weather, perfect temperature, and favorable winds helped the Boston swimmer in his wonderful performance, and, with the aid of a skilled pilot, the task did not really show his real ability, for he could have probably gone a greater distance on the return trip, but for a strong tide which set in at the Hook at the time. Only once during the tedious journey did he show signs of faltering. This was when he was recovering his second breath, which he finally got off Hoffman Island. From this point to the end of the journey his progress was made without apparent fatigue, and when he stood in the shallow waters of Sandy Hook his physical condition showed no traces of his long journey.

New York has seen numerous attempts at the hazardous task, but never has a swimmer displayed such marked ability as to steer his own course and show perfect familiarity with eddies and tides.

Richards dove off the small basin wall at the department of docks and ferries, at the upper end of the Battery, at 6:40 a. m., and reached the Hook at 2:52 p. m. He had every facility for the accomplishment of the swim, a feature lacking with most of the seekers of the coveted honors. A delegation of seven expert swimmers from Boston, members of his club, made the trip and materially assisted him in his efforts. Two boats manned by expert swimmers were flanked on either side of Richards throughout the entire course, and specially prepared nourishment was ready for him when he called for it.

During the eight hours and twelve minutes of labor he partook of nourishment three times. First he took a mixture of hot milk and fresh eggs, prepared on a little alcohol lamp rigged up on the stern of the piloting boat, and afterward ate two bars of chocolate and drank a tonic.

Richards' performance establishes a record in the event, inasmuch as he completed the swim on his first attempt. Brown, the only other man to make the complete journey, failed several times before accomplishing it. Richards is a powerful swimmer, unusually fast for a distance man, and supremely confident. His stroke never deviated, and he used the English overhand stroke, with a leg action peculiarly his own.

Giant Swordfish in Death Duel.

One of the few battles between swordfish recorded at Boston was witnessed by the chief refrigerator officer of the fruit steamer *Limon*. Officer Johansen says the contest took place near Nantucket Lightship.

The first thing which drew his attention to the water was the unusual number of dead fish floating on the surface as far as he could see. A marine glass showed him a giant swordfish feeding among the floating bodies.

In a few minutes a second swordfish appeared and thrust himself into the first fish's territory. Suddenly swordfish No. 1 made a vicious lunge at the intruder, and the water frothed and foamed. What Johansen could see of the fencing was wonderful, he said. The two fishes thrust and parried like duelists. The water about the fighting monsters was dyed a dark red by the blood from the sword wounds.

All at once, said Johansen, what he took to be swordfish No. 1 freed itself from the fight long enough to gather itself for a blow, and, quick as a flash, it struck, running its heavy sword through the body of the enemy.

Hermit Sees City After Thirty-six Years.

"Frenchy," the hermit, is looking upon civilization after thirty-six years. From the banks of a trout-filled stream and his little log cabin under whispering pines, he has gone to the clanging, crowded streets of Denver, Colo.

"Frenchy" passed through Denver en route to Columbus, Ohio, his birthplace. Unlike the hermits of fiction, "Frenchy" loves his fellow man, and, though he refused to seek him in his city haunts, he never missed an opportunity for turning his cabin, on Williams Fork, in Grand

County, into a hall of hospitality, and many old friends who had been his guests when fishing in the famous stream there greeted him and listened to a strange tale seldom heard outside of story books.

"I was a prospector first," laughed "Frenchy," when asked how the first chapter began.

"I left Columbus when I was a kid. Ain't seen my mother since that day, 'way back in seventy-seven, when I said to her: 'Well, it's the West for mine. I'm not comin' back till I'm rich.'

"And I kept my word. Oh, I ain't got so much as some, but I've sold my mine and my little old rancho in the hills for a sum that'll make 'em set up and listen, and I'm goin' back to stay.

"It seems powerful funny, the street cars and everything. Ain't slept a wink since I struck this town, for the frightful noises that go a-rattlin' all around me every minute.

"After I got tired prospectin' I went to raisin' cattle, and I've been at it now for twenty years.

"I just never wanted to come to the city, that's all," he explained, swinging his big mountain stick, which he carries for a cane, and patting the fresh crease in a brand-new suit.

"And I never would if there'd been any other way to get to Columbus. I love the city folks, every one of 'em—livin' in the hills makes you feel that way, you know, but I hate their cities. I s'pose I'll stay back there till I die in one of 'em, but I hope they'll bury me under the big pine in front of my cabin on Williams Fork."

Burns Money if He Smokes a Cigarette.

A prize of $48,306—and perhaps much more than that—awaits young Gravel E. W. Acker, provided he proves that he has "abstained absolutely from the use of paper cigarettes."

This is a provision in the will of William H. M. Gravel, the youth's grandfather, who died recently at New York. By the time the other heirs pass away, Acker's prize may be bigger.

Signposts for Aviator.

Brindejonc des Moulinais, the champion long-distance flyer, says that by far the greatest difficulty to the touring aviator is that of finding his way. After several years of study and experiment the National Aëro League, of France, has devised a method of directing signs which will remove this trouble. This system has been approved by the French minister of public works, and the league authorized to put it into practice.

Many devices were considered, but the one which appeared to meet all requirements in the best and simplest way consists in painting the figures representing the latitude and longitude of each town in huge white letters on the top of the gasometers in every town possessing a gas plant. The latitude will be to the north and the longitude underneath, to the south. Thus an aviator flying over the town will know not only what the town is, but also if he is on his right course, and, if not, how far and in what direction he has deviated from it. In other words, he will be supplied with the same information as a ship's captain would obtain from taking an observation with a sextant.

The managers of the gas plants at Amiens, Toulouse, and Nancy have already undertaken to place the signs, and the recent congress of gas companies has pronounced in favor of the request of the league. As there are 830 gas companies in France, every town of any importance will in the near future have its aërial-signpost. The league, however, will not be content with this; it contemplates placing signs in every village.

As the system is applicable to every country using the ordinary numerals, it is hoped that the initiative of the French league will be followed by every similar organization in Europe. Monsieur Rene Quinton, president of the league, has devised a series of figures after exhaustive experiments conducted from the summit of the Eiffel Tower. The outlines are somewhat different from those of ordinary numerals, notably in the case of the "4," "9," and "8," so that they may be read distinctly and easily from a great height.

Prisoner in Hot Box Car 130 Hours.

Locked in a hot box car without food or drink for 130 hours was the horrible experience of William Fletcher, of Freeport, Ill.

Earl Leaver, a railroad clerk, was passing through the yards, at Cincinnati, Ohio, at an early hour in the morning when he heard the faint sound of a man's voice coming from a near-by car. Leaver opened the door, and as he did so the form of a man fell against him. Leaver pulled him from the car and carried him to the depot near by. The man begged for water, which was given to him slowly. After he had quenched his thirst he asked for food.

After eating the lunch, the man told Leaver he entered the box car at Seymour, Ind. He went to sleep, and when he awoke found the door locked. Fletcher said he shouted at the top of his voice for hours, but to no avail. That he remained alive in the hot car, without food, for such a length of time is considered miraculous.

Every Shot Hits a Target.

The might mortars which guard the Long Island Sound approach to New York City were given a severe efficiency test one night recently, with the result that each of the twenty shots fired at searchlight targets hit their mark. The guns are of 12-inch caliber and 1,000-pound projectiles were used. Colonel Adelbert Cronkhite, commanding this important artillery post, declared that it was one of the finest target achievements in the history of mortar work in this part of the country, and the way in which the shells swept the Sound proved beyond all doubt that an enemy who tried to get into New York would receive a welcome of devastating fire.

Cycle Preacher Takes to Woods.

The Reverend L. V. Mitchell, sometimes called the "motor-cycle preacher," is now deep in the lumber regions of the Northwest, preaching the gospel. Preacher Mitchell, who occupied a pulpit at Witchita, Kan., has done good work among the lumberjacks. He always travels by motor cycle.

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